

THE

GREAT HIGHWAY



Library of The Theological Seminary

PRINCETON • NEW JERSEY



PRESENTED BY

Glenn Michael Zuber
Class of 1996

SCB
10772

5800 1
SALE CO-OP
BOOKSTORE
\$ 2.00

531

Memorandum to Mr. [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] -
[illegible] of [illegible] at [illegible]
[illegible] of some [illegible] Paul [illegible]
[illegible]



Yours,
S. W. Fullom.

THE
G R E A T H I G H W A Y :

A Story of the World's Struggles.

BY

S. W. FULLON,

AUTHOR OF "THE MARVELS OF SCIENCE," ETC. ETC.

With Illustrations on Steel by John Leech.

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."—SHAKESPEARE.

Third Edition.

LONDON :
G. ROUTLEDGE & CO. FARRINGDON STREET;
NEW YORK: 18, BEEKMAN STREET.

1854.

TO
AUSTEN H. LAYARD, ESQ.
M.P., D.C.L.,

THIS STORY
IS INSCRIBED,
IN ADMIRATION OF
HIS CHARACTER AND GENIUS,
AND AS A SLIGHT MARK
OF ESTEEM:

BY

THE AUTHOR.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

P R E F A C E

TO

T H E T H I R D E D I T I O N .

THE favour with which this work has been received at the high price of a guinea and a half, has induced me, in answering the call for a new edition, to sanction its publication in another form, which will render it accessible to a much wider circle of readers.

The observations which have been made by some of the public journals on that portion of the work referring to literature, seem on this occasion to require, as a measure of justice from me, that I should state distinctly that the characters introduced in connexion with this subject, are not designed as lampoons on particular individuals, but merely as illustrations of a system—a system which is as injurious to the interests of the public as it is to literature and to authors. My object has been to show that the highly-coloured pictures which have been drawn of a literary career are, as a general result, untrue ; that talent, and even genius, may exist, without achieving a just measure of success ; that eminence is attained only by a few, and even of this

small band, some owe their triumph as much to adventitious circumstances—to the cliquism of our literary journals, and the influence of position and personal connexions—as to any merit of their own.

I have been blamed for asserting that literature does not obtain in this country the same encouragement which it receives among the nations of the Continent; but that opinion I shall cheerfully retract when I see authors admitted to a due share in the rewards at the disposal of the Crown, in the patronage and consideration of the Government, and in the protection of the Legislature.

The road of life is not, as a rule, wide and pleasant, but narrow and rugged, particularly to those who have to work their own way onward. As such, it is described in these pages; and if human nature sometimes appears to disadvantage—if, here and there, the world is depicted in dark colours—the fault is with the times, and not with the author.

S. W. F.

20, CHALCOT TERRACE, PRIMROSE HILL,
July, 1854.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR	<i>To face Title.</i>
GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY?	<i>p.</i> 83
THE RETURN.....	279
AN UNEXPECTED MEETING	386

THE GREAT HIGHWAY.

CHAPTER I.

A RUNNING STREAM.

It was spring-time ; but neither the day nor the scene—a bleak moor in North Wales—showed the least trace of that pleasant season, as it exists in imagination and tradition. One of those sharp, blustering days which March borrows from April, and which the month of showers is rarely loth to lend, threw its sombre and dreary impress, like a guilty scowl, over the whole face of nature. The heavens were wrapped in cloud, though every now and then, the strong wind, with an irresistible gust, bared the sky to its fury. Then came a lull, till the blast gathered new force, and, sweeping down the uplands, rolled on like a peal of thunder.

The landscape was not without points of interest, though the general effect, when not enlivened by sunshine, was harsh and ungenial. A chain of heights, almost claiming to be mountains, fell in rugged steepes to the moor, which stretched far away on every side. The hills were bleak and sterile, but, here and there, a thin coat of verdure, or a straggling wood, running down to the edge of the moor, relieved their monotony, and gave their wildness a touch of grandeur. Gorges and ravines

broke the hardness of the outline, and presented, at intervals, those peculiar obstructions which are best discerned by a military eye, and are only available in strategy. These fastnesses, indeed, had once afforded the ancient Britons an asylum from the arms of Rome ; and here long afterwards their hardy descendants, in times scarcely less barbarous, maintained their nationality and independence against all the power of England's kings.

In the distance, a handsome mansion, perched on the spur of a hill, and surrounded by a well-wooded park, commanded the whole prospect, and formed a conspicuous object for miles round. Though a modern erection, it occupied the site of an ancient manor-house, called Glynn's Keep, which had for ages been the patrimony of the same race ; and the new residence, while it presented little resemblance to the old, retained the familiar designation. In feudal ages, the Keep had been one of the strongholds of the country ; and the olden Glynn's had manned it well, and won an honourable place in local traditions. Though now unavailable for military purposes, it was still, as the residence of an opulent landed proprietor, a place of importance ; and a long, straggling village, with the unpronounceable appellation of Cwm-Glynellan, crept, as in ancient days, round the skirt of the park, an appanage and dependency of its lord.

Some five miles from the village, on the bank of a swift and deep stream, much increased in width by unusually heavy rains, rose a small marquee, protected in the rear by a clump of trees, which served as an effectual barrier to the wind. A flaunting pennant streamed from the top of the tent, and, in strange discord with this display, each of its sides was emblazoned, in large letters, with these words :

“THE TABERNACLE OF THE LORD.”

About forty or fifty persons, of both sexes, were congregated in various small clusters near the tent, and a couple of carts and a donkey-chaise stood by, while the liberated beasts of burden browsed over the moor. The gathering was chiefly composed of the labouring class, though it included two or three small farmers, so numerous in this part of Wales, and who were the proprietors of the vehicles just mentioned. All had a strange and peculiar look, which, taken in connexion with the inscription on the tent, furnished a clue to the object of their meeting, and left no doubt on the mind that they were a convocation of fanatics. Such indeed they were!

It is a strange anomaly that the nineteenth century, with its advanced and advancing civilization, should have given birth, in the midst of a community of Christians, to a religious imposture rivalling in success that of Mahomet, and not unlike in its main characteristics. The sect of Mormons, or Latter-day Saints, is at once the miracle and the scandal of our age. Founded by an obscure and illiterate individual, whose mental and personal endowments were equally mean, possessing no claim to respect, and being without even the recommendation of originality, it has achieved an ascendancy which can only be accounted for by the world-wide prevalence of ignorance and superstition, or, what is hardly a less painful consideration, by man's inherent tendency to error.

Like the impostor of the East, Joe Smith, the American seer, made his earliest converts in his own family. To them he first announced the existence of the Book of Mormon, revealed to him, as he said, by a direct interposition of the Redeemer, and solemnly characterised as a supplement to the Gospel. So far, the deception was evidently suggested by the bible of Ludovick Mug-

gleton, and the book itself has been recognised as a clumsy Indian romance, the manuscript of which, after it had been thrown aside as worthless, was surreptitiously obtained by Smith from the widow of a bookseller. Special revelations, not wanting in quaintness and force, have from time to time been added to the new Koran, just as successive communications were made to Mahomet ; and, indeed, the Mormon prophet has followed his Eastern prototype so closely, that a revelation has always been at hand, as a divine commission, to abet whatever purpose he sought to accomplish. Thus he was enabled to regulate the ordinances and discipline of his church, constituting himself, as high-priest and prophet, its supreme head, both in temporal and spiritual affairs, and creating an hierarchy of twelve apostles, and a perfect host of elders, to whom the government of the various congregations is confided.

The groups assembled on Glynellan moor were awaiting the appearance of one of the Apostles, now ensconced in the tent, and who had lately come over from America to confirm their faith, and take measures for converting the whole kingdom. He was to begin his work by baptizing a neophyte, at this moment under examination in the tabernacle, preparatory to her admission into the church ; and who was herself looked upon as no mean prize.

The apostle had entered a fruitful field, long left to fallow in rank luxuriance. Ignorance the most profound, superstition only to be matched in the dark ages, and an absolute unconsciousness of moral restraint, characterised the entire mass of the peasantry ; and as a plague rises in the haunts of poverty, but spreads to richer abodes, so the infection was gradually attacking their superiors. In this remote spot no good Samaritan ever came, Bible in hand, to pour the oil and wine of religious truth into

souls perishing by the wayside. The people were left in the wilderness, and there was no Moses at their head. What wonder that, in their desperation, they danced and sung round the calf of Mormonism !

The heresy, at first springing up like a weed, had struck its roots down into the soil like an oak. True, its more repulsive features were not yet unmasked ; and the "spiritual wife" doctrine, in which it wholly uncovers the cloven foot, was, at this time, broached very cautiously even in America. The English flock, therefore, had some excuse for their credulity. There is a craving in the human mind for religion ; and if left without it, men will turn Nature herself into a fetish. To the benighted peasantry of the West, the new creed, preached by pastors as homely as themselves, appeared, in their spiritual destitution, to be a message from Heaven ; and, though its earliest adherents were the lowest poor, it quickly soared higher, and brought down several proselytes from the grades above.

"Gat a rare cold day for Miss to go in stream," observed a sturdy, athletic labourer to a stolid farmer who stood next to him. "Her be uncummon weakly, too."

"If's for the good of her soul, us munt fret about body," answered the farmer sullenly.

"Sartin, that's about it," remarked an asthmatic old dame, shivering before the keen east wind, and whose well-worn scarlet cloak wrapped closely round her, and peaked nose and chin, almost meeting at their extremities, had a very witch-like appearance. "Brother Clinton he know how many beans make a packle : he know who make it roight for the saints—eh, brother ! don't 'ee ?"

Farmer Clinton, who was remarkable for his taciturnity, took no notice of this address.

"If water's chill, we'se know what make it wairm," observed a gaunt blacksmith. "Moreover, I'n sooner unny time stairve o' cold than burn in everlastin' fire."

"Love to hear an he talk this like," returned old Thirza Wemyss. "It do ane's hairt good when it blow so."

"Howsomedever, be reether shairp to go in stream," persisted the first speaker.

"Not an's in baptism," said the old woman. "Bless 'ee, brother, I'se ha a dip mysel, anan the elder tell I. I feel's gat a fire in my banes, and the water ud put un out. I guess what it be—it's all come o' the evil ane, I know."

Here another old woman, who had approached unobserved, uttered a groan.

"Ah! bless us, sister Jail, how 'ee make I stairt, 'ee do," cried Thirza.

Jail Bird—for such was the old woman's strange name—drew down her face, but said nothing.

"Ugh!" pursued her weird sister: "how he do wrought in me. I could strip stark, and jump in stream for sport."

"You'se make no such wark here, my woman," cried the blacksmith: "so an you feel the leaven in 'ee, go your ways aff. You need be rampin' again, as 'ee wor last Sabbath, eh? Go aff wi ye, ar you'se get yoursel clap out o' church."

Thirza hailed this threat with a laugh, ringing out like a shriek.

"You's old Tom Withers!" she exclaimed. "I'se have 'ee aff, too, brother Tom, nan I go, and you'n nail a horse-shoe an my body, to keep *he* away."

At this point, an old man, who understood what was

passing, without being able himself to speak English, burst forth with the fine Welsh anthem :—

“Yr wy'n diolch i ti, yr
Hollalluog Dduw, am yr efengyl sanctaidd.
Pan yr oeddem ni, mewn
Carchar tywyll du rho'est
I ni oleuni nefol.

Halleluia !”

As the singer ceased, another groan broke from old Jail, who edged close up to Thirza Wemyss.

“Anan ! sister Jail's hold forth in the tongue, I know,” screamed Thirza, “and that make he wroughten like mad.”

“I'se have the 'postle cast un out an 'ee, if airnt quiet,” exclaimed the blacksmith. “He's wash un out pretty sprack, and better wash un out than burn un out. Amen !”

As he uttered these words, Jail, whose features had been working convulsively for some minutes, suddenly poured forth a torrent of gibberish, strongly resembling Welsh, but which, in fact, was a mere jumble of gutturals, as unintelligible to herself as her auditors. The “out-speaking,” as it is termed by the sect, affected Thirza Wemyss differently from what she had anticipated ; and she instantly became dumb, while an impression of terror fell on the whole assemblage.

Jail had just come to a pause, when the folds of the tabernacle were thrown aside, giving egress to Elder Trevor, a tall, lank, bald-headed man, with gloomy, protruding eye-brows, and a hare lip, who was followed by a figure that might have passed for Orson, so completely did it realize humanity in a state of nature. This strange being, who immediately became the centre of all eyes, wore no clothing but a girdle of goat-skin, fastened by a

cord round his loins; and, by his dress and functions, claimed to represent John the Baptist. Coarse brown hair fell in matted locks over his shoulders; his eyes were almost buried under their shaggy brows; and a moustache and beard covered his lips and chin. His ill-shapen limbs, partly overgrown with hair, heightened the repulsiveness of his aspect, and gave him more the appearance of a satyr than a saint. But, to the vulgar eye, his very hideousness was a mantle of sanctity; and he was instantly recognised as Noah Snow, the missionary from America, and one of the twelve apostles.

The apostle was only a step in advance of the convert, a young girl, enveloped in a woollen cloak, the hood of which was drawn over her head, partly shrouding her face, though affording a glimpse of features which, if now pale and abstracted, were both pretty and interesting. She was accompanied by two women, one on either side, by whom, according to the tenor of the Mormon formulary, she was supposed to be presented to the church. An old man, bearing a long white rod, in imitation of the rod of Aaron, and ranking in the community of saints as a deacon of the Aaronitic order, closed the procession.

At the brink of the stream, the party paused, and the bystanders, on a signal from the deacon, gathered round, when Elder Trevor mounted a low stool, and, amidst profound silence, wrestled with himself in prayer, denouncing the stubbornness and wickedness of the world, and extolling the holiness of the saints, whom he commended to the special protection of the Deity, concluding with the recital of a hymn, well known to the assemblage, and which, being rehearsed by the Elder verse by verse, was chanted to the tune of "The Sea" by the whole congregation.

When the hymn was finished, the apostle, impatient to

take the lead, followed the Elder with an harangue, referring slightly to the occasion which had brought them together, and then expatiating on the general prospects of the faith. These, not without reason, he declared to be full of promise, and confidently anticipated the approach of a Millenium, when the Latter-Day Saints would have the whole world at their feet. Though wild and vehement, his language manifested both tact and ability, and was eminently calculated to impress an ignorant and credulous audience. The subject-matter, too, entirely coincided with their tastes and wishes, making no reference to the duty owing to God and man—to the obligations of morality, or the sacred precepts of religion; nor, on the other hand, seeking to soothe the sorrows and trials of life by the assurance of a glorious futurity. All its boast—all its hopes, were of the present; and the preacher enlisted the sympathies of his hearers through their temporal and earthly interests. Finally, he spoke of the Mormon settlement in America—of its rapid progress and constantly increasing resources, describing, in terms exaggerated, but none the less striking, the fields and vineyards, woods and plantations, farms and pastures, of a land flowing with milk and honey, which he represented to be the immediate result of the Lord's blessing on his Saints. And, more than all, he dwelt on the glories of its chief city, the New Jerusalem, which had sprung up, as by enchantment, in those once pathless solitudes; and of its world-renowned temple, whither all mankind must one day go up to worship.

For more than an hour did the fanatic hold forth, becoming more and more excited, till, at last, he raised his voice to a distressing pitch, while his eyes gleamed with a lurid light, strongly suggestive of insanity. Every word,

however, of the mad oration told sensibly on those whom it addressed, and when he got down exhausted, there was not a soul present but thought he had been listening to the voice of an Elias.

After an instant's pause, the apostle walked deliberately into the midst of the stream, and awaited the convert, who, now denuded of her cloak, and wearing only a long bathing-dress, followed him into the river. He seized her arm as, with timid, hesitating steps, she approached, and drew her towards him, till the water was above her waist. Then he immersed her head, and was drawing back towards the bank, when his foot stumbled, and they fell together beneath the surface. For a moment they splashed about in the water, which became a perfect whirl around them—like another Bethesda, but, at length, the apostle succeeded in regaining his feet, leaving the convert invisible.

"Miss be sunk, I do think," observed Jack Davis, the labourer, to Farmer Clinton. "I'se jest peel aff my smack, and help the 'postle out wi' her."

"Do, lad," replied the farmer, aroused from his apathy, and himself stepping to the brink of the stream.

"Stand back!" cried the fanatic, discerning their purpose. "What would you do? Can't you observe, with your eyes open, what a miracle is here? The young woman's possessed, and the serpent's coming out of her. I see him now with his lightning-blazing orbs, raging like fire. How he would have tripped me up, only for the grace within. Well! I could now find in my heart to give him forty stripes save one, Scripture measure! But he's casting loose! he's coming out!"

"But hadn't us best lift her head up a bit?" asked the uneasy father.

"No, I say," returned the American : "if you meddle, you'll undo all. Let him alone, and he'll soon have enough. Yea, this is truly a miracle."

"A miracle !" echoed the deluded crowd, their eyes rivetted on the troubled water.

"Don't you see the poor creature's drowning ?" cried a voice from the opposite bank.

And, without waiting to observe the effect of his words, the speaker plunged into the stream, and raised the girl in his arms.

Apparently unconscious, she still clung, with convulsive tenacity, to her deliverer, who, taking no heed of the apostle, bore her unmolested to the bank. Few, indeed, could now blind themselves to her critical condition, and several women tendered their assistance, while her father, with some appearance of excitement, followed them into the tent.

CHAPTER II.

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

ERNEST GLYNN, who had so opportunely effected the young girl's rescue, was the grand-nephew of the landed proprietor of the district—Old Squire Glynn, a bachelor, infirm in health and temper, and extremely violent in his antipathies. Many years before, his only brother, after running through his fortune, had died suddenly, leaving two orphan children, who had no protector but himself. One of these, the father of Ernest, had, to the Squire's great chagrin, married clandestinely the daughter of a farmer, and, on the fact coming

to light, had been peremptorily discarded. Poverty and disappointment, developing the germs of incipient disease, had hurried the poor fellow into a decline, and he was snatched from life while yet on the threshold of manhood. His broken-hearted widow did not long survive, and their son, the only fruit of the ill-assorted match, being too young to provide for himself, had fallen to the care of the Squire, who, however, brought him up more as a dependant than a relation. Even this measure of grace had been much opposed by the son of the other brother, who was some ten years the boy's senior, and, from the breach in the family, had, since the death of his own father, considered himself the Squire's heir—a circumstance which caused him to regard the new-comer with extreme jealousy and apprehension. But the boy, whose engaging appearance had excited these feelings, did not gain much in his uncle's favour, the unforgiven offence of his father being visited upon him, and, as he grew up, no attention was paid to his education, beyond sending him to a grammar-school at Liverpool, where he remained till his fifteenth year, when, returning home, he was left to employ his time as he pleased.

Having seen the neophyte carried into the tent, Ernest Glynn had but just time to observe that some of the congregation bent on him looks not particularly friendly, when he was accosted by a man mounted on a strong, handsome pony, who had just ridden up, and whom he recognised as his uncle's bailiff.

The horseman, who pushed uncereemoniously into the midst of the throng, was short and thick-set, with a broad, full face, to which heavy and massive features gave a remarkably sinister character. A well-worn white hat, showing more than one blemish, was stuck on the back of his head, exposing an ample crop of red locks in front :

his bull-like neck was encircled by a bandanna handkerchief, and a velveteen shooting-jacket, of the gamekeeper cut, with corduroy breeches and gaiters, encasing legs somewhat bowed, completed his costume.

"What, Master Ernest, have they been baptizing you too?" he said, observing his dripping clothes. "Why, how long have you been a saint?"

"As you're quite in the other interest, you can feel no curiosity to know," replied Ernest, in a tone that repelled further inquiry.

"Hoity-toity, we're very grand, *we* are!" muttered Frost, who, more curious than he cared should be seen, sought an explanation from the bystanders.

Ernest, indeed, was in no mood for raillery, even if he had been on more friendly terms with his assailant. The spectacle before him had awakened the most serious feelings, both of pity and shame, for not a few of those present, the avowed adherents of a gross delusion, were his uncle's tenantry. Apart from the exhibition he had witnessed, there was something awful in the aspect of the assemblage—the face of each individual reflecting, in different characters, the same dense look of obtuseness and ignorance, in some associated with terror, in others with the deep lines of a stern fanaticism—which depressed and appalled him. A confusion of tongues arose, as the farmer's daughter was carried off; and the apostle, enraged that his functions had been interfered with, was about to administer a severe rebuke to Ernest, when he was intercepted by old Thirza Wemyss, who thrust herself between them.

"He's gane out o' she, and gat in I," cried the beldame. "I feel un all ower like fire. Hilloa, old Captain! I'se Cain, as slew his brother Abel, and the blood's on my han'

yet. You can't do aught wi' I, old Captain. I'se mock at you, and old Jail Bird, too!"—And she gave a scream which brought all the congregation round them.

"This is a marvellous thing," cried the apostle, addressing the assemblage. "I never knew the power of darkness so strong as this, that he could go from one body to another at his will. It's a warning to us, my brethren, against falling into transgression, or the same thing may come upon ourselves. Behold how the leaven works in this woman, who is one of our own fold. But I must show him he ain't master yet.—No!"—And he added to the old crone—"So you're Cain, are you?"

"Cain yoursel," cried Thirza. "I'se Kilo."

"You, Kilo!—you'n old Thirz Wemyss, you fool," exclaimed the blacksmith, stepping up. "She were makin' jest the same fash last Sabbath, and all the neighbours up to hear an her, and——"

But here the apostle, bent on displaying his gift of exorcism, pushed the smith back, and he fell discomfited to the rear.

"So you're Kilo now?" he then said to the woman: "Cain one minute and Kilo the next. But you know me, don't you?"

"You's old Captain—you's Noah Snow, from 'merikey, where the blacks be," shrieked Thirza. "But I'se laugh you to scorn, old Noah. You's can't drive aff a head o' seventy, like I. Ugh! ugh! who's care for old Noah?"

"I'll make you care, Kilo or Cain, or whoever you be," returned the apostle—"yea, if you were a chief of seventy thousand, instead of seventy. But you're not Kilo, nor Cain, you're Lucifer. Now I charge you to say if this is your real name."

"Well, it be," replied Thirza. "I'se Lucifer. But you

won't cast I loose. You's doubtin' yoursel—you cairnt, you cairnt!"—And she tossed up her arms, and jumped about, laughing like a maniac.

"This is more and more marvellous," cried the apostle, "and shows these spirits know what is passing in our minds; for just as this fallen one spoke, I was verily doubting. But I will buckle on my armour for the fight, and will wrestle, even to the cutting off of this woman from the church, if such be forced upon me; for so it is advised by our beloved brother Hyde, who is a name of terror to the evil ones."

He was silent for a moment, when he, in his turn, threw up his arms, and in a long, rambling harangue—for it could not be called a prayer—invoked Heaven to strengthen and sustain him, while he made manifest the glory of the new covenant. Meanwhile, Thirza continued to jump round him, in a sort of circle, laughing, screaming, and singing, or calling him and the bystanders the most opprobrious names, followed by frightful imprecations, till, at length, it was not difficult to believe that the power of evil did really possess her. At this juncture, the apostle finished his prayer, to which the congregation responded by a sonorous "Amen!"

"Now, Cain, Kilo, or Lucifer, I'm ready to give you battle," said the apostle to Thirza. "Now you shall come out of this woman, or you shall show you have a better right to her than the church. Now——"

"Hadn't us best hold her down, brother, for the evil one is powerful strong in her," said Elder Trevor.

"Ay, ay, hold her—bind her with cords," cried the apostle.

But no one seemed willing to undertake the task, and Thirza was jumping about wilder than ever, when Jail Bird, who alone looked quite unconcerned, pinioned her

arms behind, which not only brought her to a stand, but seemed to stun and paralyze her. Ernest turned away in disgust and horror, just as the farmer's daughter, whom he had seen carried off insensible, was coming out of the tent, now clothed in her ordinary attire, though her blanched cheek, and a langour in her eyes, still showed traces of her immersion. Her father stood by, with his stolidity and impassiveness perfectly restored, while one of the women, the wife of another farmer, pointed out Ernest as her deliverer. But at the moment, Ernest's face wore such a stern expression, that the girl, after making a step towards him, half drew back, though the surprise he evinced at her superior appearance, touching one of the weak points of her character, instantly re-assured her. Before, there had been a sort of bewilderment in her look, as if her mind were still dwelling on her recent escape, but now she approached Ernest with a grace and self-possession far above her station, combined with a modesty none the less apparent from being untarnished by bashfulness.

"It is to you I owe my life, sir," she said. "If you had not helped me when you did, I should have been drowned ; for I had lost all power of helping myself."

"So I feared," replied Ernest, his disagreeable impressions vanishing at the modulated tones of her voice. "But I hope you have sustained no injury."

"Not the least. It appears I was more frightened than hurt, though, but for you, the fright would have killed me. But you are wet through. I am afraid you won't escape so well."

And she spoke aside to her father.

"Young gen'lman's welcome, I'n sure," said the farmer, thus aroused. "Come home with we, sir, do, and dry your clars."

"Thank you, if it's anywhere near, I shall be glad," replied Ernest.

"It's at the Blynt farm, sir, and all in your road—if you're going back to the keep to-night," returned Jessie, as the young girl was named. "And you can have a horse to take you home, as soon as you're rested."

"You don't take any notice of me, Jessie," observed Frost, pushing up to them. "Are you going to give up your old friends?"

"Not my friends," replied Jessie, with an emphasis on the word, though she seemed to shrink as she spoke.

"You aint got me on the list, then," returned Frost. "Come, that isn't kindly, Jess—dashed if it is! But you wenches are all for new faces."—And he said to Ernest in an under tone—"Better mind what you're at, Master Ernest. The squire won't be above pleased to hear of your gallivanting with a tenant's daughter, you may depend. You'll take my nag, and go straight on, if you're wise."

"I want neither your nag nor your advice," replied Ernest, resenting both his familiarity and interference. "I shall know how to account for my conduct if my uncle requires an explanation."

Here Jack Davis led up the cart, and Ernest, not sorry of an opportunity of seeing something more of the better sort of these strange fanatics, whose creed and principles were then comparatively unknown, got into the front seat, with Jessie and her father, while Jack clambered in behind, and the vehicle drove off.

The road, which ran over one angle of the moor, was of the most execrable description,—torn with deep ruts, and, here and there, broken with holes, now filled with rain, rendering it almost impassable. Nevertheless, they had scarcely gone a hundred yards, when they came to a

turnpike, and drew up, in a perfect pool of water, to have the gate opened.

"That's number one," observed Jack Davis, as they drove through, for the first time breaking the silence of the party—for the presence of Ernest, so near a relative of Clinton's landlord, had been a sort of constraint. "Sartin, there never wor such a country for pikes as ourn. Cairnt go to next fiel', on your own fairm, but what 'ee come smack agen a pike."

"Isn't this a new gate?" asked Ernest. "I havn't been round here for a long time, but I don't remember a gate then."

"Oh, no! grewed up in no time, sir," answered Jack. "Don't take long to grow a pike, do it, maister?"

"Shoots up quicker nor nettles," replied Clinton, who, dense in everything else, was oracular on the subject of turnpikes. "Quickset's nothin' to 'em, and they'n beat mushrooms to bits. If the cairn 'ud only grow as quick as pikes, we'd have a rare good hairvest—uncummon."

"Sometimes they's took down, though, as clean as the carn be," observed Jack, with a grin.

A pause followed this sally, though the farmer, who never laughed, seemed, by a rolling motion of his eyes, both to sanction and appreciate it.

"Mother Rebecca never comes among us," said Ernest at length, "and I believe the magistrates have taken measures to give her a warm reception if she does show her face."

"Her were at Durnbridge gate last night, sir," answered Jack, "and I heard say her swore'd han down all the pikes in parish. Shairn't take on grievous for pikes, if's the whoole bunch gone. But, bless my hairt! here us be at t'other gate—number two!"

Another heavy toll was paid, before the gate, secured with bolt and bar, was thrown open, to give passage to the vehicle. A quarter of a mile further on, they arrived at the farmer's homestead, an antiquated house of freestone, with a tiled gable roof, latticed windows, and a large roomy porch. Here old Clinton, who was not wanting in the hospitality proverbially associated with his calling, though boorish in his words and manners, led the way to an old-fashioned parlour, while Jessie retired to her own room.

Farmer Clinton's parlour had little to distinguish it from the ordinary best room of a Welsh farm-house of the better grade. The low ceiling, as in all the domiciles inherited from our ancestors, was crossed by a massive beam, which persons of any stature were apt to learn first from its coming in contact with their heads. On opposite sides of the apartment were two doors, opening respectively to the passage and to an inner bedroom, and on another, one corner was occupied by an eight-day clock and its fellow by a glass cupboard, disclosing through its bright upper panes a goodly array of glass and china. Various Scripture pieces, gorgeously coloured, and enclosed in faded gilt frames, hung, together with a weather-glass, on the white-washed walls, and a table, with its leaf turned down, and covered with green baize, supported a tea-board equally gay, reared up like a picture. There were no other attempts at ornament, beyond a shepherd and shepherdess of china on the high wooden chimney-piece, with a jug in the centre, containing a bouquet of early flowers.

Jessie soon reappeared, and having prepared tea, Ernest was easily prevailed upon to remain; but the farmer, for whose taste the ambrosial beverage had no

charms, availed himself of the opportunity to retire to the kitchen, where a tankard of ale and a pipe offered far greater attractions.

A change had come over Jessie during her short absence, decidedly to her advantage. Her cheek was no longer pale, nor her eye dim, and to say truth, she had not been neglectful of the little arts of dress. In such a secluded life as hers, a visitor of Ernest's stamp was no common incident, and putting its peculiar associations aside, was in itself calculated to draw out the latent sympathies of her character. This, nevertheless, was not an easy achievement, and on ordinary occasions she might have passed for a Quietist, so still and imperturbable was her manner; but her placidity, the effect rather of circumstances than of disposition, covered strong and eager feelings, only overruled by her power of repression. Naturally gentle, patient, and enduring, the want of a guiding and ruling principle, the absence of any restraint but her own will, had left her susceptible of the worst influences, and the most baneful impressions. It was her misfortune that she had early been deprived of her mother, and the selfish temperament and limited capacity of her remaining parent, rarely looking beyond his own immediate wants, were ill adapted to fulfil the tender functions of that endearing connexion. She had grown up, therefore, in a sort of wild independence, which might have developed the most vicious tendencies, if a relation of her mother's, moving in a higher walk of life, had not accidentally become aware of her situation, and placed her under the discipline of a London boarding-school. Here she remained for some years, almost forgotten by her inert father, till, at the age of sixteen, she lost these advantages by the death of her protectress, and was removed from the capital to preside over the economy

of a small Welsh farm. Though she became at once the pride and the guide of her father, receiving from him all the affection of which his nature was capable, the change was too great and too disheartening, to be met with resignation, particularly as she felt no interest, after the first novelty had worn off, in the occupations and duties of her new course of life, for which, indeed, her education, as well as a delicate constitution, wholly unfitted her. Thus there was nothing to relieve the monotony of her existence, and being without the resource of books, companions, or example, her mind had gradually discarded the tutelary impressions acquired at school, and become contracted and perverted. Especially her views of religion grew more and more vague, till at last, in her craving for novelty and excitement, heightened by the spiritual destitution prevalent in that part of the principality, she had accompanied her father to the gatherings of the Mormons. Here she was considered such an acquisition, and was received with such homage—a tribute especially to her taste—that the proceedings interested both her vanity and her ambition ; and, after a few compunctious doubts, stimulated by the example of her father, and flattered and cajoled on all sides, she finally entered the sect.

The influence absent in Jessie was a ruling one in Ernest. Though not what would be called a religious character—for he wore no phylactery—religion was, in fact, his presiding sentiment, developing itself in his heart in one of its most beautiful forms, as a constant recognition of the providence and omnipresence of God. Like Jessie, he was without companions of his own station, Mr. Glynn being, with one exception, the only resident gentleman in the neighbourhood ; but his isolation was productive neither of *ennui* nor gloom. Earnest in character, as

well as name—thoughtful, diligent, and inquisitive, with little taste for the ordinary field-sports of country life, except as an occasional recreation, no small part of his time was devoted to the study and contemplation of nature ; and severed, as it were, from his equals in the social scale, sensible that he was looked upon by the rich as an interloper rather than a companion, and hence avoiding their ungracious fellowship, he was seen as often among the poor in the mine, the foundry, and the village, as in his uncle's hall. This result had been attributed to a predilection for low company, natural in the offspring of a *mésalliance* ; but, go where he might, his mind preserved his innocence, as an inalienable part of itself ; and if he acquired a touch of rusticity in his rambles, there was a native grace and suavity in his manner, which always proclaimed him a gentleman.

Jessie at once recognised his superiority, quite apart from his relationship to Mr. Glynn ; and all her taste for better society reviving, felt half ashamed of her connexion with the Mormons. Still she was drawn to the subject, as if to make her situation appear less equivocal and invidious.

“Have you ever been at a Mormon meeting before, Mr. Glynn ?” she asked, as they sat down.

“No,” he replied. “It was quite by accident I witnessed this one, having only strolled over from Glynellan for a walk.”

“You don't think much of our Church, I dare say ?” she added, doubtfully. “People have a prejudice against it, the same as the Jews had against our Saviour.”

“I must confess I share it, if it is a prejudice,” said Ernest, somewhat shocked by the parallel. “There is no resemblance between the pretensions of your leader and the mission of our Saviour. HE came lowly indeed, but armed with wondrous powers, to fulfil a thousand pro-

phacies, while he enlightened and redeemed the world. If your leader could show similar credentials, he would not want disciples."

"He already numbers thousands," replied Jessie, "and, it is said, the whole world will join him soon. But, at present, they shut their eyes, and judge without hearing, as they too often do."

"I have both heard and seen, and it has only confirmed my previous opinion," rejoined Ernest: "the exhibition of to-day was surely sufficient testimony."

Jessie coloured.

"If you mean baptism by immersion," she said, "that was the practice of the first Christians, as shown in the Testament."

"I don't refer to that, which is too nice a point for me to settle—though it is not what I believe. But the whole scene—the howling women, the fanatical crowd, and the raving preacher—seemed to me worse than a mockery. And if it was painful to see the ignorant ensnared by such a delusion, much more was it to see respectable and sensible people give it their adhesion. You, for instance—if you will pardon my saying so—ought never to have joined such a sect."

"Perhaps I wouldn't, if any one had told me not," returned Jessie, a little disconcerted, "but I was over-persuaded. I didn't like joining them at first; but, somehow, it became more natural. And it's too late to think about it now."

"It's never too late. You can't really believe in this imposture; and if you want advice, let me entreat you to apply to the curate at Glynellan, and, I am sure, he will gladly give you every instruction."

"He's an interested party—all the clergy are. Besides, they'd scoff at me now, if I were to draw back."

"*They* scoff!—those miserable fanatics! Surely you needn't care what *they* think. If you care for the opinion of others, in such a question as this, you should rather dread the scoffs of educated and intelligent people." And as another flush suffused Jessie's face, he added in a tone of apology:—"I'm afraid I have offended you. Pray forgive me. I had no right to canvass your religious opinions, but you introduced the subject yourself."

"Yes, and I have nothing to be offended about," replied Jessie, more frankly. "You have shown me I ought to examine the question further, and I will think of what you have said: I will indeed."

"I am very glad to have such an assurance from you," replied Ernest, "because I am confident you will find reason to alter your convictions; and it is time every one should express their sentiments openly, when we see such a delusion making such way. The sect seems to have been more than usually active in this neighbourhood. Have you been residing here long?"

"About a year. Before that, I was at school, and I should probably have gone back there, but my aunt, who brought me up, died soon after my return home."

"Then you don't like a country life?"

"Oh dear, no! It is so dull—and I can't follow the farming, or it might help to pass the time away. I did for a while; but it tried my strength so, they made me give it up."—And, in truth, it required but a glance at her fragile-looking frame to see that she was quite unequal to the requisite exertions.—"I wanted to go out as governess at one of the rich farmers," she added, "but my father wouldn't consent to it; so I keep the books of our own farm, but on such a small holding, that gives me very little to do."

"The farms here are all small." returned Ernest. "I

dare say you know there is some intention of enlarging them?"

"I've heard my father and Mr. Frost talking of it, and they seem to think it will be done soon, as the leases round here are all running out. It will be a great trouble to many, if the Squire breaks up the farms."

"He won't do anything harsh, I am sure," said Ernest, "particularly to the old families, who have been on the land so many years."

"If they have the preference, we shall have to go, for my father has only been here about twenty years, and that's nothing to some of the tenants. I've heard the large farmers on the other side of Glynellan have been under the family more than a century; and they say it's to provide for their sons the Squire's going to break up the small holdings."

"I don't know how that is," replied Ernest, "but it's quite true they are a sort of hereditary tenants, and some of them had ancestors out with the Glynns at the Battle of Naseby. The tenantry held the Keep against the Parliament for a long time, though our old neighbours, the Wardours, did all they could to capture it."

"So I have heard, sir. But they say there was at least one Wardour who wished the defenders success."

"You mean poor Rachel? I've heard the same story. There are several versions of it, but some day, when I go to Bydvil, I will try to learn the facts."

"I dare say you often go to Bydvil," said Jessie, with a quick glance. And as if to show no unwarrantable curiosity, she added: "it's such a beautiful place."

"I've not been over it for many years—before Mr. Burge came there," replied Ernest, "and I'm not likely to go there for some time. It's five miles from us, but only a short walk from you."

"And my favourite walk—the only one I can take without——"

She stopped suddenly, as her eye fell on the casement, and following her glance, Ernest discerned Frost, the bailiff, who had been watching them through the window, but seeing he was observed, now turned away.

"You don't like that man?" said Ernest, observing the startled expression of the girl's face.

"I confess I do not," replied Jessie, hesitatingly, as if half afraid of giving offence.

"Nor I," said Ernest. "I've tried to get over the feeling, but I can't. And I often find him close upon me, just as we have done now, when I least expect him. He has followed me here, no doubt."

"He's always coming here," said Jessie, biting her lip. "He has great influence over my father, and keeps him in a constant ferment about the proposed alterations in the farms, so that he seems to be in a sort of terror of him. But they are coming in."

As she spoke, the door opened, and the farmer and his new guest entered.

"Ah! taking it easy, Master Ernest?" he said, with a sneer, which, however, did not mask a look of vexation. "I hope I don't spoil good company; but I've just called in, Jessie, to see how you are after your dip to-day."

"I'm very well," replied Jessie, coldly.

Her father here thought it was his duty to interpose, and invited Frost to take a glass of ale.

"Well, thank'ee, neighbour, I think I'll take a cup of Jessie's tea," replied Frost; "and then I'll get her to tell my fortune in the cup—for that's the fashion in this country now. You should get her to tell yours, Master Ernest. She'd give you a rare good one, I know."

"Pray speak for yourself," said Ernest, stiffly, "and leave me to do the same."

"Lor ! how you take fire at a bit of a joke," returned Frost. "It's the way with all the Glynns—they're like touchwood, except Squire Worldly ; and, for him, you'd think butter wouldn't melt in his mouth. But come, you won't be so sharp, Jessie, will you ? Ah ! Jessie's a clever girl, Master Ernest. If I was a young fellow like you, with all your advantages, I'd give her no peace till she'd fixed the day. But I stand no chance against you. You wouldn't have me, would you, Jessie ?"

"You know I wouldn't," was the reply, accompanied by a look equally decided, on which the farmer, who had been looking on, deeply absorbed, gave the faintest possible chuckle, indicating that he considered the whole scene an excellent joke. A whisper from Jessie interrupted his merriment.

"Mun let I drive'ee on to Glynellan ; young gen'leman," he then said to Ernest, who had risen to depart. "It's a long pull on foot, and coming on a darksome night."

"It's only four miles across the moor," replied Ernest, "and I care no more for the walk by night than by day."

"Only you may meet with Mother Rebecca," cried Frost ; "and if you fall in love with any of her wenches, you'll have Squire Worldly about you, for he vows he'll take 'em all to himself. You tell 'em so, if you see 'em, Master Ernest."

Ernest turned a deaf ear to the taunt, and bidding farewell to the farmer and Jessie, left the house without noticing the bailiff.

CHAPTER III.

NIGHTINGALES.

It was growing dusk when Ernest passed out, but this was small discouragement to a sturdy young fellow, well acquainted with the country, and under no apprehension of being molested. He walked along for about half a mile at a leisurely pace, when he arrived at a disused way across the moor, and, as night had now come on, he paused to consider whether he should proceed by this route, which would save a considerable distance, or keep to the more frequented road. Temerity prevailed over prudence ; and he was soon bending his steps across the moor.

The adventure of the afternoon had been so much out of the ordinary course, and his visit to the farmhouse so suggestive, that his mind, little accustomed to such experiences, was occupied more by what had passed than by the direction he was taking, and it was not till he had gone a considerable distance that, looking round, he found himself in a spot quite unknown to him. The most natural proceeding in such a dilemma was to retrace his steps, but this was more easily done in imagination than reality ; and for nearly two hours he wandered about, now on one track, now on another, as he happened to stumble into them, without ascertaining where he was. At length, he came to the unwelcome conclusion that instead of nearing the road, he was going further and further on to the moor, where it now seemed probable that he must spend the night, or, at least, wait till the

moon, which would not rise till near morning, lent sufficient light to show some distinctive object, by which he might recognise the locality.

Just as he was thus giving up, his eye, in sweeping round, caught sight of a feeble gloaming like a reflection of light, and, though such an appearance was quite unaccountable, he determined to make for the spot. The approach was by a broken way, which he was traversing step by step, expecting every moment to plunge into a hole, when, in passing a clump of trees, he was suddenly seized by both arms, and found himself confronted by two figures, wearing the dress of women, but manifestly of a sterner and stronger mould.

"Who's you?" demanded one, unmasking a lantern and turning it on Ernest's face.

"Blessed if 't airnt squire's nevvv!" observed the other. "Is there more an 'em comin'?"—and he peered round.

"Why, be't thou, Mairster Ernest?" said the first speaker. "You's goin' to take agen the poor, too!"

"I don't know what you mean," answered Ernest.

"What you come spyin' about here for, then, mairster?" rejoined the man. "'Tairnt loike thou, I suppose; but they's set 'ee an. Where's they stowed emselves?"

"This is a perfect riddle to me," answered Ernest. "I don't who or what you're talking about, but if you think I've come here as a spy, you're very much mistaken. The fact is, I've lost my way, and seeing a light over here, I was making towards it, when you stopped me. Now if you're reasonable beings, you'll direct me how to reach the road, and let me go: and depend upon it, I shall never trouble you again."

"'Hairnt come spyin', then?" said his interrogator.

"Well, I b'lieve 'ee. Go long till 'ee reach cross-track, and then—"

"He's won't go long till he see ma'am Becky, I'se wager," exclaimed his companion, interrupting him. "No, no, young mairster. You'n don't go that like. Come an wi' you !"

"I warn you," cried Ernest, "if you commit any violence——"

"Nobody shall mell to hurt 'ee," said the man who had first spoken ; "but mate's been agen your goin', you mun come afore 'cap'n. No 'casion to be afeard."

Fear, as meant by the speaker, was not a feeling likely to rise in Ernest's breast, but his situation did really cause him anxiety, though he thought it prudent to accompany his detainers without further protest. As they advanced, he saw that the light rose from some cavity in the ground, which, on drawing nearer, proved to be an exhausted tin-mine, opening in a wide pit, whence successive ledges descended to a great depth. Here a link on the uppermost plateau threw a faint, uncertain glimmer over some thirty or forty figures, habited like the two out-lookers, in old gowns and bonnets, with blackened faces, while, here and there, it showed a massive boulder, or a bluff of earth, leaving a gulf of darkness below. Even by this light, and under so grotesque a disguise, stooping shoulders and warped forms denoted that the majority of the assemblage was of the agricultural population ; but, in truth, it was of a mixed character, comprehending not only small farmers and labourers, but several petty tradesmen from the village, while three or four stalwart forms represented the iron-works and mines.

The party were just moving up from the pit, when Ernest and his captors, one on either side, were seen de-

scending the incline by which it was entered, and there was a simultaneous halt, as the captain of the night, a burly hybridous figure, stepped a pace or two forward, exclaiming, "Who's you?"

"Jonneck," answered one of the out-lookers, giving the watchword.

"Who's gat there, then?" demanded Rebecca.

"He'n squire's nevvv," said the less friendly marauder. "Found un sneaking an to pit, up to no good: so us broughten th' whoole gait."

This announcement elicited a general murmur, and the assemblage gathered round in a threatening manner, enclosing Ernest like a wall.

"Shairn't mell o' him," cried his other captor. "Airnt a bad sart: only's lose hissself on the biggin."

"Oh! there's no hairm in he," observed one of the crowd: and two or three other voices expressed the same opinion.

"There's hairm in every one an 'em," said Rebecca, sternly. "They'n all of a piece, and the Glynns all'ays wor, time out o' mind. Wolves h'ant like to bear lambs, I s'pose; nor more airnt Glynns. Now thou speak up, young man, and tell me where you'n left Squire Worldly and the specials, or you's fare the worse."

"I'll tell you where I left him this morning," answered Ernest,—“at the Keep, and I have seen nothing of him since. I am quite ignorant whether he is out to-night, but I know measures have been adopted to put down these assemblages, and, therefore, I recommend you all to go quietly home.”

"And who sat 'ee up to prate?" demanded Watkyns, the blacksmith, jostling against him with a threatening gesture, while several others burst into a derisive laugh.

"You's busy awhile agone down at Moor-End : now needs come mellin' here. Ay, look, if's like ; I'se give 'ee a mairk to know I by."

"Shairnt tooch un," said Big Mike, a miner, planting himself by Ernest's side ; and it was evident, from the exclamations around, that more than one would support the intervention.

"Bide still, all an ye," cried Rebecca ; "or wunt like the upshot. Nobody's hairm the young man, but he's no call sneakin' roun' here. Us mun look to oursel's 'fore he."

"But if's lose hisself, 'tairnt his fault," answered Big Mike. "It's darksome enough to be loosed, I suppose, if's gat on the moor."

"Thanks for your good word, my friend," said Ernest. "You do me no more than right, and I shan't regret this accident, if, by being brought here, I am instrumental in persuading you all to disperse, without attempting any unlawful act. I don't pretend to know what you've met here for, nor do I wish to know, but I'm sure its for no purpose that will do you any good ; and——"

"Stap ! I'se tell 'ee what's for," cried a labourer at his side. "It's to smash an the two gates, down an Moor-End : that's do we good, I s'pose. Cairnt move an road without payin' pike : pay un an all us get to bite or sup : pay un an coal, an seed, an cairn, everything. Shairp wark an six shillin' a week."

"And I'se gat seven mouth to feed, 'sides my ain," observed another labourer. "You'n helped me yourself afore now, young mairster."

"If's you tell me whether Squire Worldly's out, we'n let you gane," said Rebecca, perceiving that the last speaker had raised a decided feeling in Ernest's favour ; "but we's swear you to keep dark about our meetin'."

"I've told you already I know nothing of Wordley

Glynn's movements, except what you seem to know yourselves, that the large farmers have been sworn as constables," replied Ernest. "As to taking any oath, I tell you plainly nothing shall induce me to do so, and my silence as to what I have seen here to-night must depend upon circumstances."

"We'n cairn't let un go then," cried several voices. "He's go straight aff to squire, and fetch un down an us."

"Take un wi' us, then," said another voice: and the suggestion was received with applause and some laughter.

"Here's a smack for un," cried Rebecca, producing a smock frock, "but what's us do for a bonnet. Ay; that's a help," he added, as a man handed him a dirty piece of crape. "You'n tie that roun' your hat, young mairster, and we's won't mind blackin' your phiz."

"I'll wear no disguise," cried Ernest. "If I go with you, it will be by force, and I have no occasion to conceal myself. I—"

But here two men, easily overpowering his resistance, forced the smock over his head, while another tied the crape round his hat, so as to fall like a veil over his face, and, now that he could no longer help himself, Ernest submitted to his fate.

"Cairnt peach an us now, young mairster," cried Rebecca. "Soh, lads, be ye all of a mind?"

"All!" was the unanimous response.

"Then snuff out the link," exclaimed Rebecca, "and hey for Moor-End gates."

"I'se an first," cried Big Mike, who knew the moor blindfolded. And turning on his lantern, he led the way up the incline.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FUGITIVE.

It was drawing towards midnight, as the Rebeccaites emerged from the pit, and was so dark that it required all Big Mike's tact, and all the light of his lantern, to make out the way. The party, therefore, proceeded but slowly, and for the most part in silence, as if, now the Rubicon was passed, many felt a painful consciousness of the peril of their situation. The fact was, that they were a most meek, patient, and enduring people, only goaded to resistance by desperation, by poverty, neglect, local oppression, and wrong ; and Ernest, while indignant at the treatment he had received, and abhorring their lawless conduct, could not but feel a secret sympathy with their cause. Nor was he without a share in their apprehensions, if they really entertained any ; for as he had often been accused of vagrant habits, it would be difficult, were he found in such company, to prove that he was there against his own free will ; and he had no doubt that he should be charged with a guilty complicity in their proceedings. Such an offence, borne out by appearances, would be deemed unpardonable by his uncle, and the mere imputation would probably lead to his ruin.

As these reflections passed through his mind, he naturally watched for a favourable moment to escape, but found himself so closely guarded, that he was obliged, after one or two baffled attempts, to relinquish the design. They were now nearing the road, and Ernest observed a horseman at the turnpike, but he rode off directly, as if

he were only an ordinary passenger, leaving the toll-keeper, well known as a bold, determined man, standing at the gate, with the bar closed in his front.

"There be old Jones on the spy," observed Rebecca. "He's have a tussle for't, I know."

"I'se fetch un an ugly tap if's untractious," cried the blacksmith, flourishing an axe.

"Thou bide quiet, will 'ee?" said Big Mike. "Bit too ready wi' your tappin', I s'pose."

The blacksmith growled a reply, but it was lost in a yell from the others, as they made a rush at the gate.

"What's you come here for?" cried the toll-keeper, confronting them. "You'll best go aff, I tell 'ee, or I gie some an ye a slug in your skins."—And he levelled a blunderbuss.—"The first man as comes an, steps in 's coffin."

"Now, nane o' your bounce, Jones," cried Rebecca, while the others, though brought to a stand, poured forth a torrent of threats. "Us don't want to mell o' thou, but we'll han down the gate. So jest get along, and leave we to our wark."

"I'll wark ye, if's come here," said the toll-keeper, "and next 'sizes I'se go ten mile to swear to some an ye, for all your black mugs. Han down the gate! best try it an."

"Here goes, then!" exclaimed a voice. And Big Mike, who had slipped unobserved round the toll-house, seized his arms behind. There was a sharp, clicking noise, followed by a report, as Jones, in his struggle to free himself, pulled the trigger of his gun. But the charge passed harmlessly overhead, and the toll-keeper was powerless in the hands of the miner.

"Gie un a settler for that," cried the blacksmith, rushing forward with his axe.

"Stop, man," interposed Ernest, seizing his arm. "Would you commit murder?"

"Out o' the way," retorted the smith, fiercely, "or thou'll get a clap thyself. Mun pash your finger in every puddle, mun 'ee?"

"What's to do now?" cried Rebecca, pushing between them. "Soh you, if 'ee want to whet your hatchet, just fix un in gate-post. Us airnt come here to smite old Jones. But *when*! who's yan!"

"Here them be—their's coom!" cried several voices together.

About a dozen horsemen, who had been ambushed in an adjoining field, covered by a high, close hedge, here galloped on to the road, amidst the yells and groans of the rioters, who received them with a volley of stones, which, however, though striking several, did not arrest their advance. The effect of the charge was instantaneous. The Rebeccaites, seized with a panic, made off in a body, hurrying Ernest along with them, and, indeed, having recognised his cousin in the opposite party, he was but too eager to go. The gate remaining closed, with the bolt shot, for a moment impeded the police; but this gave him little advantage, and, as he pushed across the moor, he perceived that he was especially singled out for pursuit. At first, one, then two of the horsemen, tracked his steps, neglecting the others to chase him, and his desire to escape was not diminished by an instinctive conviction that one of the pursuers was his cousin. This suggested an apprehension that he had been recognised, which appeared the more likely, as the piece of crape intended to conceal his features, had somehow got loose from his hat, leaving his face exposed, though he thought scarcely enough to admit of his being identified. He proceeded at a speed which few could match, yet not without stumbling, as he came

on sudden mounds and falls in the ground, keeping ahead for a short time, but his pursuers gained upon him, and he was despairing of escape, when he reached a deep gully, and plunging down, was lost in the scrub which clothed its sides.

The horsemen drew up just above.

"I'm afraid he's got off now, sir," said the voice of Frost. "I saw him dive down here, and he'll come out at t'other side, before we can ride round."

"That's a very natural conclusion, Mr. Frost," replied another voice, in soft, silvery accents, "and evinces your usual tact; but the fact is, I remembered the gully, and thinking the fugitive might make for it, I ordered two of the patrol to take a sweep round, so as to get to the other side first. We will remain here a moment in case he attempts to return. It is our duty to do our utmost to capture this person, for I noticed he was one of the most active of the gang. You no doubt made the same observation?"

"How could I be off it, sir? He was the very worst of 'em."

"And do you think you could identify him, Mr. Frost?" rejoined the other, in a caressing tone.

"I'd swear to him among a thousand. I know his cut. And so do you, too, sir, I'm sure." And Frost laid particular emphasis on his last words.

"My good Mr. Frost, you alarm me beyond measure. Hush, pray! If I could but feel sure it was that misguided young man, I should turn away directly, and seek to cover his escape. But the resemblance must be imaginary. Ernest Glynn could never so far forget what is due not only to his family, but to himself."

"Ah! sir, you don't know what Master Ernest 'ull do, I see—you could'nt believe it, if I was to tell you. But

there's more mischief in him than you think ; and I know he was down at the Blynt farm here this evening."

"Indeed."

"Yes. And isn't he always goin' among these labourers and such like ? It's my opinion you and the Squire have been rearin' a viper, and you won't find it out till he stings you. But there's something moving in the scrub, for certain."

Ernest, indeed, had scrambled to the bottom of the gully, where he crawled along on his hands and feet, screened from observation by the darkness, till he considered himself out of danger, when he crept cautiously up the side, and seeing no one, again took to the moor. But he had gone only a few yards, when he heard the tramp of horse, and saw he was still pursued, while retreat to the gully, were he had found such effectual shelter, was cut off. Escape seemed hopeless, but he dashed on, knowing he was close to the road, which, favoured by the ruggedness of the ground, he reached first, and as his pursuers were rapidly coming up, sprang over a gate into a farm-yard, thus placing a momentary barrier between them. He ran round the inclosure, but there was no other outlet, and, as his only chance, he made for the house, the back entrance to which, facing another way, was not visible from the road. A glimmer of light through the keyhole encouraged him to raise the latch, and though the door was fast, a voice within, which he recognised as Jessie Clinton's, inquired who was there.

"Ernest Glynn," was the reply. "Pray open the door—quick !"

The bolt was withdrawn, and he darted in, securing the door again before he spoke.

"What is wrong ?" asked Jessie, with a look of alarm, and glancing at his strange dress.

A word sufficed to explain.

"They've got into the yard," said Jessie, listening, "and will see the light. But come in here. They're all in bed but me, so you won't be seen."—And she led the way into the parlour.

"It has just struck me that I may involve you and your father in some trouble, if they trace me to the house," said Ernest, stopping: "so perhaps I had better go out to them; for they're sure to capture me."

"I hope not," said Jessie uneasily, "but at any rate, you must do what you can to get off. They can't have seen you come in. But—hark!"

There was a loud knocking at the door.

"Hilloa, neighbour Clinton!" cried a voice without—"neighbour, open the door!"

"It's Frost," whispered Jessie, her eyes flashing: "he'll keep on now, till he has my father up."

"And then they'll search the house" said Ernest. "I think I'll venture out by the front door, though even if I should get off, my cousin must reach home before me, and intercept me as I go in.—No! I had better surrender at once."

"Stay," replied Jessie. "Escape by the front door, as you propose, is hardly possible; for they have no doubt set a watch there, but I can let you into the orchard, and if you go to Glynellan across the fields, you may yet arrive home before your cousin."

"That will do well."

"Come, then. Ha! my father is talking to them from the window. He'll be down directly."

She led the way with noiseless steps, to the dairy, where, after loosening the shutters, she blew out the light, so that nothing should be seen from the outside, and opening the casement, Ernest sprang out. He looked

round, but the farm-yard, where he supposed his pursuers to be, was separated from the orchard by a wall, and, as a tall fence cut off the road, he could only see the space before him. All seemed clear, and he darted across.

Reaching the other side, he found himself hemmed in by a high hedge, which nowhere presented an opening, and he was considering how to make his way through this obstacle, when he was joined by Jessie.

"I was afraid you would overlook the gap," she said, "and I am sure you would never find your way in the dark across the fields : so I have come to guide you."

"That is very kind of you," replied Ernest, touched by her attention ; "but to take you such a journey at midnight, and leave you to come back by yourself, would be too inconsiderate. Only tell me the direction, and I shall be able to manage."

"I must put you in the way first," said Jessie.

She crept along by the hedge for a few paces ; then, stooping down, drew aside a bundle of furze, disclosing a gap, through which she glided, and was instantly followed by Ernest.

"We must slant across here to the poplars," said Jessie, as he came out. "There are half-a-dozen fields beyond when you will come to Glynellan Park. And look ! the moon is rising. You will not have an unpleasant walk."

"I am now only concerned for you," replied Ernest. "And there is one thing you haven't thought of : if they search the house, you will be missed."

"They may think I have gone to bed. I've locked my room door, and they will hardly force it open. Besides, I shall be back soon."

They walked on in silence for a few minutes, when they reached a gate opening into the next field.

"Now you see where you are, Mr. Glynn," said Jessie.

“Those trees yonder are in Glynellan Park, and your way is straight across.—Good-night.”

And before Ernest could reply, she turned away, and glided back towards the orchard.

Ernest stood looking after her for a moment, with mingled sentiments of pity and interest—shocked by her religious perversion, surprised at her strange opinions, yet attracted, withal, by her appearance, her unaffected demeanour, and certain indications of natural good feeling, which showed an aptitude for better things. But the time was not opportune for pursuing such a theme, and his mind quickly turned to other considerations, more nearly concerning himself. He resumed his progress at a rapid pace, and in no cheerful mood, though the scene around, in its present fantastic aspect, had a tranquillizing effect, particularly congenial to his imagination. The moon had now escaped from the mighty sepulchre of cloud, and glided majestically over the sky, resplendent with her light, while the rolling masses below, driven one over the other, gathered into mountains, whose silvered peaks seemed to sustain the heavens. Darkness mantled the horizon, but the beams of the queenly luminary fell like a halo over the mid-landscape, lighting and throwing up every object. Here a barn, there a hay-rick or a clump of trees, isolated by their elevation, stood boldly out, flinging their long shadows on the ground in huge and grotesque proportions, suggestive of a thousand fancies. But it was the loneliness of the scene that constituted its greatest charm, imparting to all things a solemn and mystic tone, which awakened a corresponding feeling in the spectator.

Ernest soon reached the sunken wall of the park, and clambering over, pushed through a thicket to the open sward, and thence to the house. At the further end of

the mansion was a disused porch, and, as he wished to enter unperceived, he clambered up one of the columns to a window above, through which he gained a lobby, and made his way to his own room.

Hitherto his object had been concealment, but this, natural under the circumstances, was not in keeping with his character, which shrank from even the appearance of deception. Reflection pointed out a more honourable and more manly course. As he had done no wrong, he should seek no disguise ; but boldly avow all that had occurred ; and he therefore determined, whatever might be the result to himself, to seize the first opportunity of disclosing the whole transaction to his uncle, by which he might indeed forfeit his protection, but would have no cause for self-reproach.

And now he could present himself before a juster and more merciful Judge, to whom the secrets of all hearts, cloke them as we may, are clear and distinct, and with whose name on his lips he closed his eyes, at peace with God and himself.

But a short time had elapsed when the door was softly opened, and two men entered with a light.

"He's here, sir, sure enough," observed one. "Yet I could swear it was him. How could he have got here before us?"

"We might imagine there were two Dromios," replied the other, in a bland affable voice. "And how tranquilly he sleeps!"

CHAPTER V.

A FAMILY GROUP.

IT added to Ernest's unwillingness to confess his late adventure to Mr. Glynn, that the old man, from regarding him with a feeling little short of aversion, had recently treated him with more consideration, while he manifested a degree of coldness towards his cousin, which, though never extending beyond an irritable word, or impatient gesture, indicated, by its contrast with his previous bearing, that Wordley was no longer regarded with the same favour. But Ernest still remained in the background, and no one but himself and Wordley, whose keen eyes nothing escaped, noticed the little change in his uncle's demeanour.

On the morning following the incidents just described, Mr. Glynn was seated before breakfast in the library, reading the newspaper of the previous day, just received by the London post, when Ernest entered.

The old man instantly raised his eyes from the paper, displaying a pale and sharply-cut face, to which, however, silver locks gave a striking and venerable look. His brow slightly cleared as he perceived Ernest, but the sight of a crutch at the side of his chair, showing that he was labouring under an attack of gout, did not increase his nephew's composure.

"I wish to speak to you for a few minutes, sir, if you are disengaged," said Ernest.

"Well," said Mr. Glynn : "what is it?"

"I presume you've heard of the affray with the Rebecaites last night?" replied Ernest.

"I've heard so much about it, I don't want to hear any more," rejoined Mr. Glynn, with some impatience. "I haven't seen Wordley yet,—he's not famous for early rising; but the report is, that the ruffians were down at Moor-End gate, and your clever cousin let them go off scot-free."

"I have an explanation to give regarding myself, sir, that—that—in fact, I hope you won't think hardly of me, but I was involuntarily implicated in this business."

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Glynn, laying down the newspaper with a look of astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"Nothing, I hope, to merit your displeasure, sir," urged Ernest. "No blame can possibly attach to me, but I think it right to tell you I was on the moor last night, and the rioters compelled me to go with them."

"This is a thing surpassing belief!" exclaimed Mr. Glynn, with a movement which brought his gouty foot in contact with the crutch. "Don't come near me," he continued, as Ernest was hastening to his assistance. "You have the audacity to avow that you went with these men—yielded to their compulsion—allowed them to force you to commit a lawless act! Why, you're a greater vagabond than I could ever have believed! I now see the character I have heard of you is your true one, and that your principles and tastes are on a par."

"This is hard language, sir," said Ernest, with emotion. "I beg leave to say——"

"*You* say! You've said quite enough for the present, I think. I've a great mind to turn you out of my house this instant."

"You need not turn me out, sir," said Ernest, losing his self-command. "If it is your wish I am quite willing to go."

"And where will you go to, pray?—to the parish! Unfortunately, you are not so easily got rid of."

"You shall have no reason to repeat such an assertion!" said Ernest. "I have long felt the yoke of dependence heavy: I now find it insupportable."—And he moved to the door.

"You're a pretty fellow, certainly—a pretty dependent—a grateful, dutiful, affectionate relation!" cried Mr. Glynn. "You're going to set up on your own account, are you? This is what you've been aiming at, with your books, and your scribbling! And pray do you know who has made you what you are?—who has given you your education, sheltered, and supported you?"

"Yes—my dear uncle;" said Ernest, all his resentment vanishing as he spoke. "I owe everything to your kindness, and feeling this, I am always anxious for your approbation. But I am sure you will acquit me of blame when you hear how little I had to do with these men."—And he related the occurrence as it had happened.—"You may ask me," he continued, "why I didn't claim the protection of Wordley, instead of running away, when he came up with the patrol. My reason was, that I was afraid he might place my conduct in an unworthy light; but as soon as I reached home, I determined to tell you myself all that occurred, and now you can decide if I have done anything wrong."

The old man's keen grey eyes ran over the speaker's face with a quick, sharp glance, as if he hardly understood this candour; but before he could reply, the door opened, admitting Wordley Glynn.

The new-comer was a tall, gentlemanly man, so much

Ernest's senior, that while the one was but just verging on manhood, the other might be set down as having reached middle age. His appearance, at first sight, was extremely prepossessing, but occasionally one caught a furtive look of his dark, penetrating eyes, which was calculated to weaken the impression, though the unswerving suavity of his manners, indicating such perfect singleness of purpose, often disarmed mistrust, and set the most wary at rest. In polish and refinement, indeed, Wordley Glynn was a Chesterfield, while in temper he was, or pretended to be, a counterpart of Griselda. Hence, while no one could say he had ever done any good, few men were so popular, and he was considered to be the very cream of human kindness, merely from the kindly flavour of his words. Nevertheless, he did not wholly escape the shafts of detraction, and it must be confessed there was one mystery about him which afforded them a fair target. This, strange to say, was a deficiency of coin, notwithstanding a handsome settlement from his uncle, in addition to the property he inherited from his father—a deficiency known, indeed, only to a few, and none the less perplexing from being relieved by startling flushes of prosperity, which still left his temporary embarrassment unaccounted for, as, from his residing at the Keep, he was not burdened with the cost of an establishment. But wags rush in where sages fear to tread : and, during his stay at the University, some of the perverse freshmen, wiser in their generation than any Fellows, attributed his financial fluctuations to high play, while, as a further reflection on his pretensions, they transformed his name of Wordley into **WORLDLY**—a designation which had followed him into Wales, and by which he was often spoken of among the country-people, who were quite unconscious that it was intended as a reproach.

"Good morning, dear uncle," cried Wordley, with a look of deep affection, as he advanced hastily towards Mr. Glynn ; darting, at the same time, one of his furtive looks at Ernest. "I trust you are better to-day."

"No, I'm worse—a good deal worse," growled Mr. Glynn, though his eye dropped before the beaming tenderness of the inquirer. "And what makes me so, is the manner in which everything is done to worry and torment me. A nice business you made of it last night, after all your grand intentions."

"I assure you, I spared no effort to carry out your wishes," replied Wordley ; "and though unsuccessful, in so far as I failed to secure any of the ringleaders of the conspiracy, I fear—I say *fear*—one of them was identified."—Here he half turned to Ernest.—"From him we may learn something of its organization."

"You are far too mysterious for me," said Mr. Glynn. "But if you identified any one, you have, of course, issued a warrant for his apprehension."

"No, I have not, and you must pardon me, dear uncle, if I don't enter into any further explanation at present. I can see you are suffering acutely this morning, and I should spare you as long as possible the sad communication I have to make."—And, still feigning reserve, he spoke a few low words to Ernest, eliciting an indignant look.

"What is this?" said Mr. Glynn to Ernest, with a frown. "You confessed your folly, then, because you were discovered ! This is the moral of your fine story !"

"Has Ernest told you he was one of the rioters, sir?" asked Wordley, innocently.

"No !" exclaimed Ernest. "But I have stated the fact—that I was present. More I defy you to prove, or even that, except from my own lips."

"You are losing your temper, Ernest," said his cousin

—"as if I could have any object in view in this matter but your good—to rescue you from such infamous associates. I hope, sir——"

"Stop!" said Mr. Glynn, who had been scanning them both with a piercing glance. "That he was present he admits. The only question is, did he take part in the proceedings? You say you recognized him—though he was disguised, and it was so dark that some of the patrol lost their way. To place his identity beyond doubt, why didn't you follow him?"

"I am glad I adopted the very plan you suggested," answered Wordley. "I traced him as far as Blynt farm, but there he succeeded in concealing himself."

"Do you mean he got into the house?"

"I had every reason to think so."

"Then, why didn't you search it?"

"I did, with the exception of one room, which, being occupied by the man's daughter, who was supposed to be asleep, I was prevailed upon by her father not to enter."

"That is the very room you should have examined—if you thought he was in the house," exclaimed Mr. Glynn, with sudden vehemence. "But I suppose you came quietly home, and found he was still absent."

"I wish to represent everything that can tell in Ernest's favour," answered the candid Wordley, "and therefore I must state that when I reached the Keep, I found him in bed. He appeared to be asleep when I looked into his room—if that is of any consequence."

"It's of the highest consequence," replied Mr. Glynn; "for it proves he couldn't have been concealed at the farm. I'm glad of it, and glad you have done him such justice."

"I'm sure you can't suppose I have any other feeling towards him, sir," returned Wordley. "Indeed, I could

hardly have supposed he was at the farm at all, if I had not heard from Frost that he had been there in the early part of the night, and I understand—" here his lip curled a little—" drank tea there."

The cloud returned to Mr. Glynn's brow at these words. "Is this true?" he asked of Ernest.

"Quite true, sir," was the reply; "and since Wordley has mentioned the circumstance, I will state what led to it."—And he briefly narrated his proceedings at the Mormon meeting.

"You saved the girl, then!" said Mr. Glynn. "Humph! Well, we must get rid of all these Mormons, if we can, and the Rebecca rascals, too. But what you have done is creditable to you, Ernest, and not the less so that you have given a modest account of it. Still, I would rather you didn't go so much among the lower classes, as I hear you do. Quixotism never does any good, and is liable to be misrepresented. But I believe your intentions are good—yes, I believe they are."

"I hope you may always think so, and feel so, sir," said Ernest.

But, to judge from appearances, the person most gratified at the turn which affairs had taken, was Wordley, whose countenance, always benignant, now quite beamed with pleasure and good feeling.

"Let me congratulate you, Ernest, on the triumphant manner in which you have cleared yourself in this transaction," he said, laying his hand affectionately on Ernest's shoulder. "It is a source of infinite satisfaction to me, I assure you."

"He owes you small thanks for it, then, whatever may be due to his own manliness and candour," remarked Mr. Glynn. "But we've done with it now! Help me in to breakfast, boy."

"Permit me, dear uncle," said Wordley, in his softest tones.

"Wait till I ask you," answered the old man, tartly.

And taking Ernest's arm, he hobbled out of the room.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TABLES TURNED.

ERNEST had hitherto been allowed to spend his time as he pleased, without hindrance or inquiry. At first, this freedom had been very agreeable, but it soon became irksome, and he began, as he grew older, to feel the want of direct employment. His active mind was weary of idleness; and occupation, so long desired as an amusement, at length became a necessity. Cut off from ordinary pursuits, he had no resource but study, which, indeed, his seclusion from society rendered particularly suitable; and assiduous attention to drawing, algebra, and the beautiful problems of Euclid, so effective in developing and enlarging the intellect, was rewarded with no mean success. Nor was he insensible to the allurements of science, in time making himself master of its leading principles, and acquiring, above all, a practical knowledge of botany, which rendered his rambles about the country as instructive as they were interesting. Mr. Glynn's library was not large, but it contained an average assortment of books, including, of course, the works of our standard authors, and a few notable productions of the day: it

was with the former Ernest preferred to linger, and the magic verse of Shakspeare, and those master-pieces of refinement and composition, Addison's elegant essays, gave tone and elevation to his ideas, while, in graver moments, he fostered his literary tastes at the feet of Blair. Fiction, as well as poetry, presented irresistible charms to his imagination ; and he learnt to dwell on the tender pathos of the Vicar of Wakefield, to smile at the sarcasm and irony of Le Sage, and to laugh at the quaint drollery of Cervantes and Swift.

With such pursuits and associations, and isolated from all other companionship, it was natural that his mind should take a contemplative turn, and become more mature than usual at his years. In his solitude, he found pleasure in committing his impressions to paper, and not unfrequently his ardent and aspiring genius clothed these reflections in a poetic garb, and sought a poet's inspiration. Perhaps, he failed, but his labour, after all, was not thrown away, and practice accustomed him to new combinations of words, greater felicity of expression, more subtle and nobler thoughts, and a freedom and fluency of diction, destined at a future time, to lend him signal aid in his way through life.

But this round of occupations, in some respects very congenial, by no means reconciled him to his situation of dependence, which was naturally repugnant both to his feelings and his aspirations. In his frequent musings on the future, he cherished a youth's ambition of distinction, and longed to go forth, in his own strength, to encounter the struggles and difficulties of life, and make them the stepping-stone to fortune : besides which, the uncertainty of his prospects being well understood, he was exposed to familiarities from the servants, and other annoyances, which made his position at the Keep very galling to a

quick and sensitive spirit. But Mr. Glynn would listen to no proposal for setting him forward in life, and a sense of duty restrained him from taking any steps with that view himself, while they were denied the sanction of his protector.

All these things considered, it will excite little surprise that the servants attending in the breakfast-room, on the morning indicated in our last chapter, were struck with amazement when Mr. Glynn entered leaning on Ernest's arm, and followed by the lately all-potent Wordley, who, however, dexterously concealed, under a cheerful and smiling aspect, the vexation rankling within. Poor Ernest nearly ruined himself at the outset, by treading on his uncle's gouty toe, but, after a slight reproof for his clumsiness, the invalid allowed him to arrange his chair, while Wordley, who had hastened to take advantage of the accident, was coldly repulsed.

There was a silence of some minutes, and it seemed to the servants, as they vanished from the room, that things were on the brink of a revolution, the consequences of which it was impossible to foresee. Ernest himself sat quite bewildered ; the old man was moody and taciturn ; and only the polished Wordley, preserving the same serene demeanour, appeared perfectly at his ease.

The meal was finished at last ; and Ernest was greatly relieved at the prospect of liberation.

" You've eaten no breakfast," said Mr. Glynn, as he rose from table.

" Thank you, I am not hungry, uncle," replied Ernest.

" Late hours last night," remarked Wordley, in a tone of kindly caution. " You must really be more regular, Ernest, or you'll injure your health."—And he looked appealingly to Mr. Glynn.

"You've been moping too much over your books, boy," said Mr. Glynn, without heeding the appeal. "You'd better put them aside for to-day, and take a ride out. I want to send over to Bydvil to Mr. Burge, and you may as well jump on the bay mare and go. Tell Hurley," he added, turning to the butler, "to saddle the bay mare for Mr. Ernest, and in future she's to be kept entirely for his use."

At this unheard-of announcement, the butler glanced inquiringly at Wordley, as if to obtain his sanction of the order, but Wordley's eyes, half-anticipating the reference, were so intent on the newspaper, that he was insensible to anything else.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "Another murderous outrage of the Rebeccaites!"

"Hang the Rebeccaites!" said Mr. Glynn.

The butler was now so startled, that, in passing out of the door, he ran against the footman, scalding his foot with the contents of the coffee-pot. Both instantly disappeared.

"You may set off at once, Ernest," said Mr. Glynn, "or, perhaps, I'd better write a note to Mr. Burge, and ask him to come over here, as I want to see him particularly."

"Excuse my interfering, dear uncle," said Wordley; "but if you are sending to Mr. Burge about the ore discovery, I venture to suggest, as Ernest is unused to such things, that you should intrust your commission to me. I have always hitherto enjoyed your confidence, and you have never found it misplaced."

"You think so?" said Mr. Glynn, frowning.

"I hope *you* think so, sir."

"I will tell you what I think," returned Mr. Glynn.—
"That you have been playing the tyrant over this lad—

misrepresenting, perhaps maligning him to me, and making me regard him in a false light. Something reminds me I have not long to live, and I wish you to understand that I consider him as near to me as yourself, and he shall be treated in every way the same."

"I can have no other wish, dear uncle. But you must pardon me for observing, while Ernest is present, that you do not act with your usual justice in saying I have misrepresented him to you. I am deeply hurt and wounded by such a charge, and should have thought my disposition was too well known, and too well appreciated, for anything of the kind to be imputed to me. I call upon Ernest to say when I have so far forgotten what was due as much to myself as to him."

"I have made no complaint against you, Wordley," said Ernest, "and I wish for no recriminations. I am satisfied not to be condemned for the future without being heard in my defence."

"A very proper feeling," said Mr. Glynn, approvingly.

"I am sorry I can't compliment you on your candour, Ernest," replied Wordley, in a reproachful tone; "for you seem as if you wished to confirm our dear uncle in the impression he has conceived against me. I must beg you to discard insinuations, and speak out boldly, that I may know what I have done, and be able to defend myself; for my uncle's affection is too precious a thing for me to give up. You ask not to be condemned unheard yourself; let the same measure of justice be conceded to me."

"It will be time enough to make such a request when I accuse you of anything," returned Ernest. "I am now

too well pleased with the position assigned me to make any reference to what is past."

"You hear!" cried Mr. Glynn to Wordley: "why do you keep on?"

"What I have said, sir, has always been for Ernest's good," replied Wordley—"though I may have sometimes seemed severe, and may even have been too zealous. Unfortunately our best intentions often appear to disadvantage. But I think I understand Ernest now; and am confident he will one day understand me: meanwhile, let us live in affectionate reliance on each other."

He extended his hand to Ernest, who, touched and conciliated, forgot his animosity, and eagerly accepted the overture, while Mr. Glynn looked on without making a remark.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN OF CAPITAL.

MR. BURGE, the gentleman whom Ernest was about to visit, was the owner of Bydvil House, a mansion of some pretensions, about five miles from Glynellan. Though possessing a considerable estate, he had no claim to be reckoned among the hereditary gentry of the principality, being, in fact, an emigrant from London, where he had acquired his wealth in the lottery of trade. Yet from his grand airs, his predilection for such erudite matters as heraldry and genealogy, and the contemptuous tone in

which he spoke of the industrial and humbler classes, one could never have dreamt that his father had been a baker, and that he had himself been engaged in the hardware line. To say truth, the real facts were known only to a few ; for one of those irresponsible potentates called Kings-at-Arms, who can do what can be done by no other Kings—give a man a grandfather, had distinctly traced his descent from a Norman baron, hight De Bourg, who came over to England with the Conqueror, and whose great grandson, Reginald de Bourg, in the reign of Edward the First, changed the family designation to De Burgh, whence it was afterwards corrupted to Burge. It was most amusing to see how implicitly Mr. Burge, the retired iron-master, believed in this fiction—how he swore by it, and what a passion it begot in him for all works of a genealogical character, especially the unrivalled productions of Sir Bernard Burke, which he justly regarded as the best authorities. But his veneration for birth, though seemingly carried to Castilian excess, was entirely contingent on its association with wealth ; for he considered rank without riches a mere imposture. It was not the coronet, but the gilt upon it—not the ancient name, but the long rent-roll, that won his respect and commanded his homage. Gold was not only his idol ; it was his mistress. Money had done so much for him—had given him such a status and position in the land, and invested him with so many specious pretensions, that he looked upon it as a living influence, and cherished for the sordid metal something of the grateful feeling due to the Giver of it. To him people were good or bad, respectable or despicable, according to their means ; and, carrying out this principle, he shut his eyes to the turpitude and selfishness of the rich, while he saw all the sores in the naked souls of the poor.

Yet with so much devotion to the Golden Calf, there was one other thing for which Mr. Burge felt involuntary reverence ; and that was talent. In the height of his success, he was sensible of an innate deficiency, which he imagined must be equally apparent to other eyes, and which, therefore, continually haunted and embarrassed him. In society, though he could really converse passably enough, he scarcely ventured to open his lips, for fear of making an awkward mistake ; and at home, he dreaded the criticism of his own servants. Miss Felicia Cramboy, his daughter's governess, had dexterously contrived to overcome this diffidence, as far as regarded herself, and to her Mr. Burge was more communicative, and more unconstrained, than to any one else, at the same time looking up to her as a sure guide in the hour of difficulty, though she appeared to him as dust beneath his feet in point of station.

In the estimation of the world Mr. Burge was a religious man. Regularly every Sunday he was seen at Church in his high pew, from which he could look down on the congregation—he loved the chief place in the synagogue ; and no one could behave in Church with greater decorum : the only thing he omitted was prayer. He was also a frequent attendant at the Communion, which he “received,” as the phrase goes, in the most edifying manner, without a thought of the poacher he had committed to prison the day before, and whose wife and children were then perishing of want. As for his deeds of benevolence, are they not recorded in the public subscriptions of the county ? and how many of the charitable institutions of the metropolis, as their advertisements in the daily journals attest, reckon him among their supporters ? This was a munificence of necessity, due to his social rank and position ; but in public life, where the

great maxim is to make the most show at the smallest expense, he was scrupulously economical. As chairman of the board of guardians, he reduced the parochial expenditure of the poor to the lowest possible ebb, and the dietary of the Bydvil workhouse, by which body and soul were so ingeniously kept together, was held up by the Poor Law Inspector to the envy and admiration of surrounding unions as a perfectly scientific achievement—a soothing reflection for Mr. Burge, when, in another world, he sues for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue !

Mr. Burge was at lunch with his daughter Emily,—a young lady still under tutelage, with a pretty, budding face, and more than an ordinary share of bashfulness, when he was informed of Ernest's arrival. As a dependent on his uncle, with no great expectations, the visitor was not one of his favourites, and his distaste for him was increased by the cold, haughty manner which Ernest always opposed to the arrogance of the rich, but which was considered by the parvenu to be directed exclusively against himself—and, further, by his alleged vagrant habits, which he regarded as indicative of radicalism. The ironmaster, however, was most desirous of cultivating the good graces of Mr. Glynn, who, after allowing him to reside some time in the neighbourhood without acknowledging his existence, had, in consequence of his supporting the same interest in the county, lately condescended to admit him to his acquaintance ; and hence he thought he could not do less than invite the Squire's nephew to lunch. But, to mark his superiority, he put on his grandest air as his visitor entered, extending him his forefinger, which Ernest, rather despising maimed civilities, affected not to see, merely bending to the great man,

but making a more gracious inclination to Emily, whom he had met once or twice before on similar terms.

"I thought you must be hungry after your ride, sir," said the host, rather taken aback: "so had you brought in here, hoping you would join us."

"Thank you," replied Ernest: "I must ask you to excuse me, as I breakfasted very late this morning. I have come over with this note from my uncle."

"Very happy to receive it, sir," said Mr. Burge—he was lavish with the appellation of "sir."—"Your uncle's a very good man, and holds a high position in the county, sir—justly so, for he's worth his hundred thousand, I should say—full!"—And he broke open the note.

Ernest turned to Emily, and by way of opening a conversation, made some common-place remark on the state of the weather, to which the young lady made an inaudible reply.

"So much rain must have kept you a prisoner for some time," pursued Ernest, enlarging on the fruitful topic.

Emily confessed that it had, and Ernest was pondering how to open another parallel, when Mr. Burge, who regarded his advances with anything but complacency, interposed.

"Mr. Glynn tells me, sir, he has mentioned to you what he wants to see me about," he said.

"Yes," replied Ernest. "Some pieces of ore have been picked up at Glynellan, and he wishes to show them to you, and ask your advice about working the ground."

"Very good," said Mr. Burge, encouraged by this reference to resume an imposing attitude. "Mr. Glynn is a man of great judgment, sir!—what is his own opinion?"

"I think he's rather daunted by the result of Mr. Lewis's operations at Carthyr."

"Mr. Lewis!—Mr. Lewis is nobody, sir : he's no test. Mr. Lewis isn't worth his five thousand, sir ; and to work out a scheme of that kind requires a thorough good man—a man who can afford to sink his ten thousand, and look for no immediate return."

"Then, you think my uncle may be warranted in opening the ground?"

"That depends, sir ! Capital may do much : we owe all we possess to capital. Our manufactures, our commerce, our railroads, the mighty power of steam—" and Mr. Burge waved his hand theatrically—"all, sir, are owing to capital. Capital is a beautiful thing : it gives us great feelings, sir, and a man's nothing without feelings."

"Capital certainly gives the power of doing much good," said Ernest, rather won by his last words ; "and it's a satisfaction to reflect that a great many people will find employment at Glynellan, if this undertaking is carried out. That is one reason why I wish for it."

"Well, sir, we shall see," said Mr. Burge. "I shall be very glad, and very proud, to afford such a respectable gentleman as your uncle is, sir—the richest man in the county, I should say—the advantage of my experience ; but before I can give an opinion, I must examine both the ore and the ground. If you are going straight back, I will ride over to Glynellan with you."

Ernest expressed his satisfaction at the proposal, and readiness to return at once, but at this moment a servant informed Mr. Burge that his bailiff was waiting to see him ; and the great man, with an exclamation of impatience, went off to another room, reluctantly leaving Emily and Ernest to themselves.

There was a moment's pause, when Emily stole a glance at the door, as if half inclined to follow her father, but, at length, desperately took refuge in a book.

"Are you studying German?" said Ernest, who had caught sight of the title.

"Yes," faltered Emily.

"Can you get a master down here?"

"No : I learn from Miss Crambo, my governess."

"Ah ! she is a very accomplished person, is she not?"

"Very—and learned too."

"A regular blue-stockings?"

"I musn't say that," replied Emily, smiling, and almost forgetting her shyness ; "for she is anxious to make every one as learned as herself, which I believe blue-stockings are not. She has just started a school in the village, for the poor people's children ; and goes herself to teach them. In fact, she is there now, or you would have seen her."

"And is she the only teacher?" asked Ernest.

"Well," answered Emily, all her blushes returning, "I may say she is, though I try to help as much as I can. She goes to the school one day, and I the next, and papa has lately engaged a young woman to be constantly there, though he was very averse to it at first."

"I can't conceive on what ground he could possibly object to it," remarked Ernest.

"He thought education might make the poor discontented."

"I am sorry to differ from him, but that opinion has always appeared to me a very great fallacy. Besides, the poor about here can hardly be more discontented than they are, while the ignorance around us is something frightful, as I dare say you have found."

"Frightful indeed ! you will hardly believe many of the villagers had never heard of God."

"I know it only too well," answered Ernest, "and glad I am to find the light is breaking in upon them. Miss Cramboy is more to be honoured for this good work than for all her learning. You say nothing of your own efforts, but no doubt they are very serviceable. I hope you are making way."

"If it depended on me, we should do very little," said Emily ; "but Miss Cramboy is so persevering. And we get on better since papa has given us a schoolmistress, as many of the children, who can only speak Welsh, are now made to understand us. Poor things ! they seem very anxious to learn."

"As I am sure you are to teach, though you must find the task rather an arduous one sometimes."

"It requires patience."

"If that is the chief qualification, you must be eminently successful."

"I don't know that," said Emily, with her sweet smile, while there was more of pleasure than embarrassment in the colour that suffused her cheek ; "but I confine myself to the humblest steps of learning at present, seldom rising above the alphabet ; and this is not so trying as the higher branches, which are taught exclusively by Miss Cramboy. We have divided the scholars into two classes, one under her control, and one under mine, and we each bring on our pupils in our own way ; for Miss Cramboy has peculiar notions on the subject of education, and she is now carrying them out."

"And you adhere to the old-fashioned way of beginning at the beginning. Well, I prefer your plan, and am sure it will answer best. I half suspect Miss Cramboy is the theoretical teacher, and you the practical."

"Oh, Miss Cramboy knows best—by far ; only I feel I can do so little, I don't aim at much. If I can teach

my scholars to spell, read, and sing the choral service, I shall be satisfied."

"You teach them singing, then?" said Ernest. "As I can't hear the performance of the scholars, may I have the pleasure of hearing the mistress?"—And he glanced at the pianoforte.

Emily was now caught in a trap, from which she would have done anything to free herself, but as escape seemed hopeless, she suffered Ernest to lead her to the instrument, and had just taken her seat, when they were interrupted by the return of Mr. Burge.

CHAPTER VIII.

RACHEL'S SORROW.

EMILY, on perceiving her father, and observing that he looked far from pleased to see her and their visitor on such friendly terms, was ready to sink from her seat ; but, whatever might be his secret feelings, Mr. Burge made no remark, soothing himself with the reflection that Ernest would have few opportunities of improving these relations, as he should take care to keep him at a safe distance for the future.

He now hurried him away, scarcely allowing him to say adieu to Emily, who, on her part, was afraid to look up. They found their horses at the door, and mounting, rode off in no sociable mood, and but a few casual words passed between them all the way to Glynellan. They parted at the hall-door, and the iron-master was con-

ducted to Mr. Glynn, while Ernest, not sorry to be rid of him, sauntered to and fro on the terrace.

Nothing showed more strongly his improved position in the family, than the altered demeanour of the servants. The miserable sycophants who had passed him unnoticed the day before, scarcely deeming him equal to themselves, now went out of their way to testify respect, and he already tasted the sweets of fortune. But the hard training he had undergone, through so many years of humiliation, taught him to appraise such things at their right value, and his disposition was not likely to be spoiled by his unexpected elevation.

As he was ruminating on these incidents, he heard his uncle's voice, and presently the squire appeared, accompanying Mr. Burge to the door. An adept at feeling the pulse of the times, so as to discern a change almost by instinct, Mr. Burge, from being scarcely civil before, now regarded Ernest with the utmost benignity.

"What do you say to a ride back to Bydvil, my young friend?" he said, laying his hand on Ernest's arm. "Can you spare him to-day, sir?" he added to Mr. Glynn. "We've really seen too little of him, and our pleasant journey here this morning has made me reproach myself that we arn't better acquainted."

"He can go, by all means," answered Mr. Glynn.

"You will be alone all day, sir," suggested Ernest, to whom further companionship with Mr. Burge was not very inviting.

"Well thought of, young man," remarked Mr. Burge. "I like to hear your nephew, sir, speak in this manner. It shows his affection for you: it shows he has good feelings; and I am glad to see a young man with good feelings."—Mr. Burge, who so recently had offered Ernest his forefinger, now seized his hand, and gave it a cordial

shake, exclaiming—"Your uncle may be proud of you, sir, for you're a credit to him."

Such advances quite conciliated Ernest, who began to reciprocate the kindly sentiments Mr. Burge expressed. His horse was soon brought round, and they rode off together, the ironmaster, as they proceeded, turning the conversation on the subject of his uncle, and the affectionate manner in which he had spoken of him that morning, which, if the truth must be told, had led him to regard Ernest as a very promising fellow, likely to be worth money some day, whatever people might think. Thus they arrived at Bydvil in the best humour with themselves and with each other.

Mr. Burge, unmindful of his late resolution, at once sought out Emily, who was amazed at the reappearance of Ernest, and still more, to see her father, who she thought had been so abrupt before, treat him with such marked attention. Instead of discouraging their intercourse, indeed, he now seemed disposed to promote it, and soon left them to themselves, desiring Emily to take their guest over the grounds, and show him all that was to be seen.

The young girl quite forgot her timidity in the novelty of her situation. There was, in truth, something so reassuring in Ernest's manner and conversation, in his frank, expressive countenance, and the obvious kindness and suavity of his nature, that it had an immediate effect, and certainly could not be overlooked by one of the gentle sex. Hence they were speedily on the best terms, and as they walked through the domain, there was nothing in their demeanour to indicate that they were not old familiar friends.

"This is the first time I have been over Bydvil," remarked Ernest, "and I had no idea it was such a

charming spot. Mr. Burge has certainly improved it very much ; for his predecessors, the Wardours, who latterly never resided here, had allowed it to fall into a sad state of neglect."

"Nothing could be worse," replied Emily. "I remember, when we first came, the whole place was a wilderness. The fate of its ancient owners was reflected at every turn."

"A melancholy fate—for such an ancient family to come to an end, and have its name blotted out ! I always think of it with regret ; for, you know, the Wardours and Glynnns were neighbours for centuries. And now they are completely swept away—not a vestige left, even on their own inheritance."

"Oh ! we have a vestige of them—the hermitage, for instance, where we are now going, and a very interesting memorial it is. There is a legend connected with it, too—but of course, as a Glynn, you know the story of Rachel Wardour."

"I've heard several versions of it, and have long promised myself to learn the right one. You are just the person to be able to tell it."

"I can only give you the one current here, without vouching for its accuracy ; and, indeed, poor Rachel's real history can never be clearly ascertained. Her father, Sir Humphrey, as you no doubt know, was one of the Puritan leaders, in the time of the Commonwealth ; and he shut her up in the hermitage to keep her from her lover, a young cavalier, bearing the to him hateful name of Glynn. But the cavalier determined, by fair means or foul, to carry Rachel off, and it is said that she was not unwilling. Be that as it may, it is supposed she got out one night on the terrace-wall, with the intention of making her escape, but in the dark fell over, and her body

was found in the lake next morning, without anything to explain the mystery. The terrace is now gone, and only a part of the wall remains ; but three or four clumps of wall-flowers on the top, which come out every spring, are still called Rachel's Sorrow, and are said to mark her steps along the wall."

"This is by far the best account I have heard," said Ernest, "and makes a perfect little romance, though it doubtless owes much to the narrator. But here is the hermitage itself."

"And what do you think of it? Is it not very picturesque?"

"Very indeed."

The ruin, which was really a striking object, abutted on a sheet of water, with banks of emerald turf sloping back to umbrageous trees, clothed in the first foliage of Spring. Around was a pretty, though not extensive view ; and the hermitage was so placed as to command the whole. Crossing a public footway, which wound round the side of the lake, the two friends stopped before the broken wall.

"There are the flowers, you see—Rachel's Sorrow," said Emily, "what a pity they're out of reach!"

"They're not out of reach, if you'd like to have some," replied Ernest.

"Oh ! I wouldn't have you climb up for worlds," said Emily, playfully, yet with a touch of alarm. "You'd be falling into the water, like poor Rachel, and then we should have another sad legend to tell."

"But not half such a romantic one," answered Ernest, "as I should swim ashore, and escape with a wet jacket."

And before Emily could interpose, he clambered up the end of the ruin, and gained the top of the wall.

"Pray don't go on!" cried Emily in a half-scream. "You'll fall over: I'm sure you will."

But the audacious Ernest still crawled along the wall, and had just reached the first blossoms, when in drawing back, his hand slipped, and the flowers dropped into the water.

"What is the matter?" cried Emily, as he uttered an exclamation.

"I've had my usual ill-luck, and let them all go!" replied Ernest.

"What a pity! but never mind: I'll get some another day."

"I'd rather fall in myself than you should be disappointed," said Ernest. And clinging to the ivy which masked the face of the ruin, he lowered himself to the water's edge, stretching over as far as he could to reach the flowers. Emily, who had previously trembled for his safety, now became terrified.

"He'll be drowned!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands. "What shall I do? what *can* I do?"

"Why did you let him climb up?" said a girl, who had approached unobserved along the public footway. "You're so spoiled by fortune, you can't even see a few weeds rankling on a wall without craving for them."

The upbraiding tone and angry glance of the speaker, combined with her unexpected appearance, so startled Emily, that for an instant she could make no reply.

"It was wrong, but I didn't wish him to get them," she said, at length, almost mechanically. "How could I keep him back?"

"How?" answered Jessie Clinton. "You pretend not to know! But there, he's safe! *You'll have Rachel's Sorrow, after all.*"

She gave a short, derisive laugh, and disappeared round the angle of the ruin, as Ernest, having recovered the flowers, began to scramble back along the wall.

"I'm so glad you're safe," said Emily, as he alighted on the ground. And though still hardly herself, she received his proffered spoil with a smile, which gave back the sunny look of her face. "I've been so alarmed," she added. "Did you see that person talking to me?"

"No, but I thought I heard voices. Who was it?"

"I can't imagine, but she looked like some farmer's daughter from her dress—though there was something superior about her, too. I dare say you can see her from the path. Yes, there she is."

"Oh! I know her," said Ernest, colouring a little, he knew not why.

"I thought you must, from the way she spoke. You'll hardly believe how she frightened me—she looked so wild! And as she went away, her words sounded quite ominous, though more from her manner than what she said."

"Her manner may be strange, but she wouldn't wilfully annoy you," replied Ernest, "though she naturally startled you a little, coming upon you unexpectedly. See! she is looking back."—And he waved his hand.

The girl, who had been walking at a quick pace, stood still a moment, but presently resumed her progress, without responding to his recognition. Emily suddenly became very grave, and looked in another direction.

"I'm afraid I've tired you with so much walking," said Ernest. "Would you like to go home?"

"Just as you please," answered Emily. "But here is Miss Crambo, who seems to be seeking us."

The governess, whose appearance might be summed up

in the immortal description—"fat, fair, and forty," was sweeping towards them in great state, and it was amusing to observe, as she drew nigh, the studied propriety of every part of her dress, and the measured decorum of her step and carriage. Holding her parasol aloft at an angle of 45, she curtsied to Ernest in the style of Louis Quatorze, while he, regarding her with sincere respect, met her with equal politeness.

"You must come in now, Emily," she said, "or you'll scarcely have time to dress for dinner." And she added, in an under tone : "How *could* you, my dear ?—so improper !"

"What have I done ?" asked Emily, confounded.

Miss Cramboy looked extremely shocked in reply, when Ernest, who saw the by-play, and could not conceive what it meant, came to Emily's relief by accosting the governess, and keeping her in conversation till they reached the house.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SCHOOLMISTRESS AT HOME.

MISS FELICIA CRAMBOY should have been captain of a man-of-war. The Navy List, with all its martinets, could not have produced a stricter disciplinarian, or, perhaps, a more consummate tactician. In her estimation, one great point in life was appearances ; and she required the decks, so to speak, to be always nicely hollistoned, the rigging complete, and the ship in beautiful order. Not that the condition of the crew—of the mind within—was

an object of indifference to her : she was just as desirous that the vessel should be well found as she was that it should be well kept ; and though having an eye to show, was equally eager for service.

In respect to tactics, Miss Cramboy's capacity was proved, to the satisfaction of every one, in the ascendancy she had gained over Mr. Burge. The very pride of the ironmaster became in her hands an instrument for his subjugation ; and by dexterously appealing to his vanity, at the same time that she made him tremble at his deficiencies, she had brought him, by degrees, to regard her as at once a monitor, a counsellor, and a guide. In this manner, the once poor despised governess became an oracle and authority in the household ; and it must be owned that, if the means by which she sought her ends were sometimes equivocal, her influence was used for good, and acted as a check on the arbitrary disposition of the master.

The truth was, Miss Cramboy had a will of her own, which, had occasion served, she would have been ready to enforce with a high hand, but, being in a dependent position, she maintained her supremacy by tact. Thus, even when appearing to give way, she was merely manœuvring, and at the critical moment, dashed forward, and, by a stratagem, secured the victory. The pride of learning might have led her to look with contempt on Mr. Burge, had not the latter, by looking up to her, tacitly acknowledged her superiority—a homage which made her forgive and compassionate his defects, while it caused her to feel a genuine interest in his fortunes. Nor could he have followed a better Egeria ; for if Miss Cramboy was qualified, on the one hand, to take the command of the Channel fleet, on the other hand she wanted only a cap and gown to become a learned Professor. Eve did not

pluck the fruit from the forbidden tree, in her guilty thirst of knowledge, with more avidity, or more determination, than her ardent daughter gathered it in the field of letters. Languages, algebra, mathematics, the arts and sciences—nothing came amiss to her ; and if the mill of her understanding did not turn it all into grist, it was not from want of industry or diligence. But the chair of Gamaliel is not intended for woman ; and, in her pursuit of abstractions, Miss Cramboy was too often carried away by the rapids of theory, bringing forcibly to mind the Roman Governor's taunt to St. Paul, which, unjust in its first application, remains an imperishable memorial of the instability of human wisdom.

Full of the sentiments manifested at the hermitage, Miss Cramboy, on reaching the house, followed Emily to her room, determined on a lecture.

"This was really too bad of you, Emily," she said in a tone of reproach. "You know it is a point on which I have such decided views—such convictions ; and nothing could distress me more."

"I can't imagine what I have done," said Emily.

"I can only say, then, all my precepts and instructions have made very little impression upon you. Had it been otherwise, you would not have been alone with a gentleman for more than two hours, walking and talking without restraint. You forget the proprieties, Emily. I believe I have always taught that there are five vowels, and five proprieties, namely—"

"Oh ! don't, dear Miss Cramboy !" cried Emily, deprecatingly.

"Don't what ? What *can* you mean ?"

"Don't repeat the vow—the proprieties. I assure you I never forget them."

"Emily, I am positively amazed at you. Never forget

them indeed? Then, why don't you put them in practice? why don't you act up to them?"

"It was papa's wish I should show Mr. Glynn over the grounds."

"And does that alter the case? Your papa naturally speaks as a gentleman, but you should be guided by the acute perceptions of a lady. Had you but hinted at the impropriety of the proceeding, I am sure his strong good sense would readily have admitted the plea. But I'm afraid you were only too willing to go, Emily. I'm afraid you're like too many other young ladies, rather fond of flirting."

"How can you think so?" said Emily, looking vexed, and perhaps a little guilty.

"Don't blush so, I beg," returned the governess. "There's scarcely anything so unbecoming to a young lady as blushing, and you are always doing it. It's nothing but a vicious habit. Now don't fling yourself in a chair, Emily—as if you were a bundle of clothes. One hand—the *left* if you please—sweep lightly behind your dress, so as to bring the drapery gracefully round, and then—on the edge of your chair, Emily—sit on the edge. Now you look as well again."—And Miss Cramboy, recovering her good humour, laid her hand caressingly on her pupil's head.—"But there's the bell. Make haste down, and whatever you do, dear, mind the proprieties."—And with these words, the governess sailed out of the room.

Notwithstanding her injunction to be quick, Emily, between the duties of the toilet and her own thoughts, lingered till the last moment before she descended to the ante-room, but fortunately Miss Cramboy was equally dilatory, and they made their appearance together.

The governess was very animated during dinner.

"I hear some ore has been found on your uncle's property, Mr. Glynn," she said. "Have you ascertained how much metal it contains?"

"My uncle has shown it to Mr. Burge, and he thinks favourably of it," replied Ernest.

"That is encouraging! for there are few, I should imagine, so competent to judge of such matters as Mr. Burge. Ah! my dear sir"—and she turned to the host—"what would your ancestor, Sir Eric de Burgh, temp. Edward IV., have said, could he have foreseen your success as a mineralogist?"—Miss Cramboy was a firm believer in the family pedigree, as in everything else that redounded to the honour of the Burges.—"He would hardly have grieved over the forfeiture of his broad lands, for his share in Tewkesbury fight, had he known that a remote descendant would, by his judgment and diligence, restore the splendour of his house, and draw a store of wealth from the depths of the earth. It is a triumphant reflection for you, but it is a prouder thing to have the heritage of such a good name, that you may sustain and add to it by good actions."

"Miss Cramboy, ma'am, you're a woman of great feelings, and I honour you for it," said Mr. Burge. "The world is nothing, ma'am, without feelings. A glass of wine with you, ma'am."

Miss Cramboy bent graciously.

"Apropos of mineralogy," she resumed, "what do you think of its sister science, geology, Mr. Glynn? We have a fine field for investigation in our neighbourhood."

"So much so, it is impossible to look into our mines and pits without being struck by it," replied Ernest. "You have no doubt turned our local advantages to account."

"Well, we have managed to accumulate a little collec-

tion, just sufficient to illustrate the principal textures. Do you know, sir, your daughter"—such was Miss Cramboy's official designation for Emily—"is making some progress in the science."

"Glad to hear it, ma'am," replied Mr. Burge.

"It is indeed very necessary in the present day," pursued Miss Cramboy; "for the various departments of physical knowledge are making such strides, there is no saying where they will end. We might almost expect before we die, to be able to communicate with a man in the moon."

"Then, you believe there is a man in the moon, ma'am?" said Mr. Burge, rather astounded.

"It certainly has inhabitants, whatever may be said to the contrary," answered Miss Cramboy; "but whether they belong to the genus homo, is a point we shall never know till we can fly."

"Our attempts in that direction have always failed," observed Ernest; "and we can no more raise ourselves from the earth now, with all our scientific and mechanical appliances, than Rasselas could in the Happy Valley."

"Rasselas is a fiction," said Miss Cramboy, "and science deals only with facts. It does not follow, because we have failed hitherto, that we should not succeed hereafter. All we have to contend against is the attraction of the earth, and the tenuity of the atmosphere. A flying machine was actually constructed a few years ago, and an association started, under the name of the Aërial Transit Company, to carry passengers through the air, but it fell to the ground from want of funds."

"Ah!" cried Mr. Burge. "Nothing can be done without funds, and funds can do anything. It's a beautiful thing—a beautiful thing, money!"

The dessert being produced, Miss Cramboy, who had done fair justice to the viands, began to expatiate on the advantages of a vegetable diet.

"The fact is," she observed, "the produce of the earth is our natural food ; and only for the artificial state in which we are brought up, we could go every day into the woods, and find a banquet under every tree. What a delightful thing to live on acorns !"

"Only fit for pigs, ma'am," said Mr. Burge.

"You are probably not aware that they contain an immense amount of albumen," returned Miss Cramboy, "and this, in fact, is the great objection to their being used as an edible, as albumen requires strong digestive power. But there can be no doubt that they are a part of our natural aliment, as the structure of our teeth is expressly adapted for this kind of food."

"Very true, ma'am—regarded in that light," said Mr. Burge, always convinced by the governess's logic, which he thought he should only expose his ignorance by opposing.

"I have been endeavouring to illustrate a series of similar facts at the school this morning, in a lecture on the anatomy of the mouth," resumed Miss Cramboy. "I want the children to understand why they are given teeth, and there is nothing so forcible as instancing familiar things."

"But do you teach the children anatomy, ma'am?" cried Mr. Burge.

"I try to give them a smattering of everything."

"There can be only one objection to such a course," remarked Ernest, while Mr. Burge, whose self-esteem dreaded the heels of universal education, looked rather clouded. "The children of the poor must leave school

before they can understand so much learning, or no doubt it is most desirable that every one should be instructed in the first great truths of natural science. But in this case especially, I should imagine there is a want of time to teach them anything beyond reading and writing."

"Not a want of time, but a want of Welsh," said Miss Cramboy. "That's my difficulty,—for even the schoolmistress talks a dialect hardly to be understood. But I hope in time to be able to inculcate a general knowledge of astronomy, geology, botany, optics, pneumatics, hydrostatics, electricity, heat, magnetism, anatomy, and physiology in general, with—"

"But, ma'am," began Mr. Burge—

"Don't suppose I take the credit of these great experiments to myself, sir," said Miss Cramboy, gently averting the impending outburst. "No, the credit, the honour, the effect will be all your own. It is under your sanction that the scheme has been originated, and its success will justly add new dignity to your position, and show how worthy you are to fill it."

Satisfied with this coup, which completely stifled all Mr. Burge's objections, Miss Cramboy rose to withdraw, and Ernest, murmuring a parting aside to Emily, flew to open the door. There was nothing he would have liked better than to have gone straight to the drawing-room, but Mr. Burge, as a man who took his ease in his inn, was on a regular allowance of port, and never stirred till it was discussed. Moreover, he was now very eloquent in commendation of Miss Cramboy, whom he pronounced to be a person of extraordinary genius, and, what was more, great feelings, more than once exclaiming—"what that woman would do, sir, if she only had capital!" Ernest joined eagerly in her praise, though, in fact, he

was somewhat doubtful regarding her system of education at the village school, but hoped for the best results from the humbler efforts of Emily.

They heard the sound of music as, after a considerable interval, they were proceeding to the drawing-room, and on entering, Emily was seen at the pianoforte, which naturally brought Ernest to her side.

"Pray don't move yet," he said, as she was rising. "I have a claim upon you from this morning, remember."

"I am such a poor performer," replied Emily.

But she resumed her seat, and played a soft and plaintive air, accompanying the music with her voice. This, though at first betraying a nervous tremor, gradually acquired great expression and sweetness; and if, after all, the execution was only of average merit, it seemed a perfect triumph to Ernest, whose ear was unaccustomed to such harmony. At length, it was time to take leave, and he rode off in high spirits, musing all the way home on the incidents of the day.

CHAPTER X.

GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY?

THE same thoughts still floated in Ernest's mind, when he reached his own chamber, but how long he tumbled on his pillow, and how, when he fell asleep, his dreams brought him in continual contact with Mr. Burge, Emily, Miss Crambo, and Jessie, associated confusedly with Mr. Glynn, Wordley, and Frost, it is unnecessary here to relate. Enough, that he awoke in the morning, after a

night thus spent, in a very excited state of mind, with an intuitive perception that he had at last fairly entered on the great stage of life.

He was unwearied in his attention to Mr. Glynn, who, on his part, seemed to grow more attached to him, though his temper became every day more querulous and trying. Mingled with the Squire's affection, indeed, was a strong leaven of selfishness, which infected and governed his every impulse. If he clung to Ernest—if he leant upon him more and more—it was to engross all his time, and all his thoughts, without heeding, in the pursuit of his own comfort, how he harassed his nephew. And often, after devoting himself to him the whole day, Ernest's only reward was a peevish word, while a spirit of contradiction and habit of finding fault rendered all his efforts to soothe him of no avail.

But if Mr. Glynn was thus hard upon Ernest, much more did he vent his spleen upon Wordley, to whom he evinced, in his whole demeanour, a decided feeling of hostility, speaking of him with a bitterness and vindictiveness which shocked his younger nephew. But nothing could disturb Wordley's equanimity, or repel his insidious advances. He manifested for Mr. Glynn the same devotion, the same unabated affection, as in former days, and they were only the more apparent at each repulse. Night and day, too, his eye was rivetted on Ernest, following, watching, and tracking him with a tiger's instinct, and more than a tiger's stealth.

In his own rectitude and innocence, Ernest was unconscious of this surveillance, and, having nothing to conceal, went about, when not engaged by Mr. Glynn, in his ordinary way, occupying himself with his studies and pursuits, now varied by frequent visits to Bydvil. Here he became such a favourite with Miss Cramboy, that she

actually permitted him, on one or two occasions, to remain alone with Emily, and even to accompany her to the village school, in defiance of all the proprieties ; and Mr. Burge became more and more convinced that he was a young man of excellent feelings, worth a dozen of his cousin Wordley—or would be, some day, when he came into his capital.

But Fortune is least to be trusted at the very moment that she is all smiles. One bright afternoon, Ernest, after a rather close attendance on his uncle, was botanizing on the Moor, when he heard a step approaching, and, raising his eyes, discovered Jessie Clinton.

“Miss Clinton ! how glad I am to see you !” he cried. “I can now make my acknowledgments for your assistance the other night. Did you reach home as you wished ?”

“Yes, thank you,” was the reply. “And you ?”

“Oh ! your directions were so clear, it was impossible to mistake my way. However, I told my uncle the whole story next morning, keeping back only how much I was indebted to you. I hope your absence was not discovered.”

“No, I was supposed to be in my own room,” said Jessie, a flush suffusing her face, for which Ernest could not account. And she added abruptly—“I saw you at Bydvil the next day, in Mr. Burge’s park.”

“You knew me, then ?” replied Ernest. “I waved my hand to you, but you didn’t appear to observe it.”

“You were so far off,” said Jessie, evasively, and looking down.

“Do you know you quite frightened Miss Burge ?” continued Ernest.

“She is easily frightened, then. But I thought she was more alarmed about you than at me. I only told her you were safe, and had got her some of the flowers.

Is she growing very pretty, do you think?"—And she stole a quick glance at him.

"What do *you* think?" said Ernest, smiling.

"I hardly looked at her," replied Jessie, "though I thought her beauty was more in her complexion than her features. But they say women are severe judges of each other, in more respects than one."

"I can't admit that. All the kindness of our nature comes from you, and it is scarcely credible you should deny that sympathy to yourselves which you give so freely to us."

"Perhaps it is well to think so. I have tried to cherish the same feeling, but all I know is so opposed to it, I find it impossible."

"What already?—before you have really entered life! This is indeed taking a gloomy view of things, and I hope an unwarranted one; for, though you may speak from a certain kind of experience, you must not judge of human nature from the contracted sphere around us."

"It is the sphere in which I am placed," said Jessie, dejectedly; "and the only one I am ever likely to move in."

"You don't know that," said Ernest, soothingly—and Jessie gave a scarcely perceptible start. "No one can say what will be their future. If I thought mine would be confined to this place, I might look on it as despondingly as you do: for a life so inactive, and so aimless, is anything but what I desire. But we may find even here something to interest us, and we can all make a future for ourselves, in our own anticipations."

"And will it ever be realized, Mr. Glynn? No! I have cherished such anticipations, and what have they led me to? You see! I have, as you say, hardly entered life, and yet I find it a blank."

"Then, had you not better have kept looking cheerfully forward, instead of mourning over what is beyond help? Very likely, events may bring me as much disappointment as they seem to have done you: the path of life is not always smooth to any one, and I have no expectation of an exception in my favour; but why should we foreshadow evil? I dream of a better time—a time when I shall take a part in the world—and that almost reconciles me to the present."

"I have dreamt too much," said Jessie, with a sigh. "That may be one reason why I am so discontented."

"But have you any real ground for discontent?" said Ernest. "Life seems all sad to you now, because you have commenced it with a reverse of fortune. You are thrown down here, from a station you were well qualified to fill, to herd with people little removed from savages: you find yourself without friends or companions, and without suitable employment: and the ignorance and superstition around you are so gross, so universal, that you accept them yourself. But throw them from you, and you have the power of improving your own situation, while your example may benefit others."

Jessie shook her head. "Who will care for my example," she said, the tears gathering in her eyes. "That at least can have no effect."

"There is no station so humble but it has its influence," rejoined Ernest, "and yours will be felt among the farm-servants, in your own household. You have no opportunity to be their teacher; but they may, and no doubt do, look to you as a pattern. We are all here to work out a certain destiny, which we may in some measure shape ourselves. You are not placed in the world by accident, but by Providence; and it is well to bear continually in mind that Providence has a purpose in all things."



John Leach

Travelling is not gambling

"Even in the misery of such a worm as I am!" said Jessie, with something of irony in her tone.

"Yes, even in the fall of a sparrow," said Ernest, "as we are told; and, on the same Authority, your well-being is considered far more. But I am aware we differ on these points."

"No, no, we do not! Will you forgive my cavilling? I agree in all you have said—in all you have told and taught me! and I have wholly given up the Mormons—I wonder how I could ever have joined them! But I should have gone on, sinking lower and lower, if you hadn't rescued me. You have snatched me from them, body and soul!"

"Not I—I have done nothing," said Ernest. "But come! we will say no more of it now: it excites you too much. And you look fatigued. Will you sit down on the bank here, and rest yourself?"

It was a pleasant spot, and the sun, which had scarcely shown himself all the Spring, had come forth that day in bridegroom splendour, throwing a bright gleam over every object, so that, under this influence, even the old, bleak moor had put on a wedding-robe. But the two friends had but just seated themselves, when a couple of horsemen turned on to the road in front of them, and Ernest was rather disconcerted to perceive his cousin Wordley and Frost.

Wordley, who never forgot his manners, made his cousin a polite bow as he rode past, at the same time smiling benignantly; but Frost looked the picture of jealousy and rage.

"I must go home now," said Jessie, who had turned very pale, "or that man will be there before me."

"I think you need hardly apprehend that," replied Ernest. "He is no doubt going over the land with my

cousin ; and it will be some time before their rounds are completed. But would you like me to walk to the farm with you ?”

“No—I think not,” answered Jessie, a strange expression passing over her face. “I had better go alone.”—Yet she still lingered.

“The fellow keeps looking back,” observed Ernest.

“I shouldn’t mind his watching me—as he does now more than ever,” said Jessie, “but he sees everything through a false light. But no matter ! I am not so afraid of him as I was, and I shall try to be less so.”

“A wise resolution !” said Ernest, “for Frost is a man who will trample upon you, if he thinks you fear him.”

“Then, I will not !—no, let him say what he will ! I feel more cheerial now ! Your advice has done me so much good, and made me see things so differently, that I shall meet him in quite another spirit. Thank you again, Mr. Glynn, for all your kindness.”

They parted ; and Ernest, fearing the construction which might be placed on their rencontre by his cousin, retraced his steps to Glynellan, in a mood harmonizing little with that in which he had set out.

And what were the thoughts of Jessie ? What was it that, as she walked away, made her forget her intention of hurrying home—forget Frost and his machinations, and think only of what had been told her by Ernest—of Ernest’s sympathy, of Ernest himself ? Every one has heard of the clown who was transformed by love into an Adonis ; but transformations as strange, and as complete, take place around us continually, and are never noted or seen. Such was the change in the character of this young girl ! It had been her ambitious dream that she should contract a fortunate marriage, which would raise her, in the happiest and most congenial mode, to a

superior station ; and hence had arisen that pride in her personal attractions, that love of admiration and distinction, which made an obscure and monotonous existence a trial and a burden. Her only solace, indeed, had been the secret reveries of her own imagination, the suggestions of a romantic disposition, and the reverent homage of the country boors. She waited, longed, pined for an opportunity of appearing, as she had every right to appear, in a wider and higher field, where her hopes and wishes might possibly be realized ; and her heart truly sickened at the deferred result. And now she had been brought face to face with the nephew, perhaps the heir, of her father's landlord, under circumstances calculated to excite a singular interest on both sides, and what had been the effect on her feelings, expectations, and prospects ?

She no longer remembered her ambitious project—her own aggrandizement—herself : all she thought of was *him*—his generosity, his courage, his manly and noble sentiments ! What was fortune, to a woman's eye—what rank, what station, in comparison with these ? All the romance of her nature was kindled and inflamed by their first interview ; and, from that moment, she strove by recalling his words, by dwelling on all he had said and looked, to model herself, in some degree, by the standard of his excellence. Not till she saw him in company with Emily, was she conscious how far this ecstasy had beguiled and entrapped her. Then the quick pang of jealousy, sharper than a serpent's sting, struck the fell truth into her mind. She loved him !—loved without hope, and without return !

But nature is a strange mystery. This young girl, who had appeared so frivolous, almost heartless, now stood forth a gentle, tender, and impassioned being. She had cast the slough of her selfishness, as the butterfly, awaking

from its long sleep, casts its shroud ; and had come out as delicate and as beautiful. Her whole character was refined, spiritualized. No sordid or unworthy sentiment, no selfish instinct, now warped or perverted it ; and a flood of innocent feelings gave a new light to her existence, making her, for the time, unconscious of its hopelessness. Under the spell of this trance she was happy ! All she wished was to be in Ernest's presence, to see him, to hear him speak, or, in his absence, to be able to think of him still. Thus she nourished and deepened the passion which had seized on her entire being. Her steps now were always directed towards Glynellan, and several times, to her great joy, the hope which had led her thither was realized, and she met and conversed with Ernest. Nor was her infatuation dispelled by the fact, that Ernest, while evincing a deep interest in her welfare, always maintained a bearing impassible to misconstruction, and was obviously unsuspicious of the passion he had inspired. Love, especially in woman's breast, burns not the less brightly from being unseen.

Meanwhile, Ernest's position at the Keep underwent a sensible change, and he could not conceal from himself, as time wore on, that he had greatly declined in his uncle's favour. Mr. Glynn had become as sullen as he was irritable, and Ernest frequently found his eye fixed upon him, with an expression far from reassuring. Sometimes, he thought Wordley, who daily recovered something of his former influence, had once more set the old man against him, but that wily diplomat was so kind and caressing in his manner, that he could not admit the suspicion. He determined, however, on the first opportunity, to come to an explanation with his uncle, and full of this intention, was one morning following him from the room

after breakfast, when Mr. Glynn turned sharply round, and told him that he did not require his attendance.

Ernest was no less hurt than humiliated by this repulse; and leaving the house, he strolled moodily into the park, where he threw himself on a bench, absorbed in the thoughts which the incident inspired.

What could have instigated such a change in Mr. Glynn's feelings towards him? Did his favour depend on so frail a tenure, that every little current of temper, however unprovoked, could dictate its withdrawal? If so, he had better abandon the field at once, as his whole nature recoiled from a servitude so debasing. For the moment, resentment, brooding over repeated affronts, was stronger in his breast than affection, and he resolved to bear such a yoke no longer, but to ask the old man to put him in some way of earning his own livelihood, that he might attain a position which, if it were ever so humble, would at least be honourable, and free from the taint of dependence. More than once, too, it flashed across his mind that Mr. Glynn had been informed of his having been observed in company with Jessie, and had been led to conclude that they were maintaining a clandestine acquaintance, whence, after some consideration, he began to perceive the danger which might result from their being seen together, and resolved to avoid all occasion of meeting her in future. But resolutions are more easily made than carried out: Ernest was still deep in meditation, when he saw Jessie approaching, and the next moment she was at his side.

"I was just thinking about you, Jessie," said Ernest.

"Were you?" replied Jessie, her face lighting up.
"That was very kind of you."

"You won't think so when I tell you I was as much

interested for myself as for you. I shall be going away soon, and I wished to bid you good bye."

"Are you going for long?" said Jessie, with a slight tremor in her tone.

"I hardly know yet. It is just possible I may never return—at least not for many years."

"Is not this sudden?"

"The resolution, but not the project; for I have been thinking of it a good deal lately."

"How sad!" said Jessie, her eyes fixed on the ground.

"What! to go out and see the world!"

"Not for you. I was thinking of myself—how desolate I shall be when you are gone, with no one to advise or direct me, no one to encourage me to good."—And she wore such an abstracted look, that she seemed to be more thinking than speaking, as if she addressed herself rather than him.

"I thought you saw these things from another point now, Jessie," said Ernest, all his sympathy aroused by her distress.

"I've tried to look Up, but can't. Everything seems so against me."

"Still the same gloomy view of your condition."

"I can never take any other."

"Then you have not yet shaken off the materiality of the Mormons. No doubt you have your trials, but life has a bright side as well as a dark one, and we must balance the good against the evil."

"But if it is all evil?"

"That can only be where there is crime—where the evil is in our own minds. I often feel as dissatisfied with my situation as you can be with yours, and never more than at this moment; but reflection tells me it may be

materially improved by my own efforts, and to them I must look for a remedy."

"It may be so with you, for you have everything the world can give."—And as Ernest shook his head, she added—"At least you can choose your own path, and your own pursuits. That is open to all men. But women must take whatever fortune may send them ; our portion is endurance."

"Endurance is the badge of all our race," replied Ernest—"of the strongest and most unscrupulous, as well as the feeble. We may murmur—we may resist ; but, after all we are obliged to submit. No man can vanquish fortune. Call it Providence, and half the burden is removed."

"If the smart is the same, does it matter who inflicts it ?"

"Most certainly. Assured that the Great Disposer is essentially a Being of love and compassion, we shall feel consoled under His heaviest visitations, knowing they are designed for some good end. This is our discipline for a future state, and is not without effect in the present. If we never suffered, we could never feel. Human sympathy and human kindness would be dead, and we should be more discontented than we are now. I am glad I've been able to say this to you ; for you may remember it when I am away, and I shall feel consoled myself in having cheered and encouraged you."

"You are always so considerate," said Jessie, averting her head. "I hope you will prosper and be happy."

Ernest bade her adieu, and she walked slowly away, leaving him standing alone. A low sob, which escaped from her involuntarily, showed how deeply she was moved ; and had it reached Ernest's ear, might have recalled him to her side. But as it was, he suffered her to depart unconsolated, though he watched her receding

figure, as she disappeared among the trees, with equal interest and sympathy.

Turning round, he found himself confronted by Mr. Glynn, who had approached from an adjacent cover, in company with Farmer Clinton.

"So you are unmasked now, sir!" said Mr. Glynn, with an indignant glance. "I have witnessed your proceedings, and can no longer doubt your infamy."

"Since you address such language to me, perhaps you will tell me what I have done to provoke it, sir!" replied Ernest, hardly less excited.

"Nothing—of course nothing!" returned Mr. Glynn, in his bitterest tone, "though here is a poor man, the father of your miserable dupe, who may view your conduct in another light."

Ernest's eye sought the farmer, who stood looking at him in his usual stolid way, but made no remark.

"If I have injured Mr. Clinton, let him speak," exclaimed Ernest. "Let me know what I am accused of—what I have to answer for. I am ready to meet every inquiry."

"I will make but one," said Mr. Glynn, sternly. "I ask you if you have not just parted from Mr. Clinton's daughter."

"Us see her wi you, young mairster," observed the farmer, with a sudden glimmer of interest.

"And is that all my offence?" returned Ernest.

"That all! yes, sir, and enough too!" exclaimed Mr. Glynn. "What object can you have in view but disgrace to her family or dishonour to your own. That all! You think it no crime, then, to be following this girl about the country, meeting her now in one place and now in another, beguiling her from her home and her duties, causing the greatest anxiety to her father, and holding

her up to public scandal! All this is quite correct in your estimation!"

"Far from it, sir," replied Ernest. "If I were capable of such conduct, I should be base indeed! But I deny it. I have never met Miss Clinton but by accident."

"Say no more, sir!" cried Mr. Glynn, fiercely. "It is in keeping with your perfidy to endeavour to screen it by falsehood. Fume as you please, you shall hear me out! This is a likely spot, truly, for an accidental meeting with a person who resides five miles off, and who has frequently been observed loitering here till you join her! But I waste words on one lost alike to honour and truth. From this moment I discard you. To-morrow you will know what is the only provision now remaining to you; and, for the future you may act as you please."—And he moved away, before Ernest could reply.

"So I have to thank *you* for this!" said Ernest to the farmer, who still regarded him with a vacant stare. "Or you are deceived yourself, and believe I have wronged you, because others have told you so!"

"Don't know, young gen'lman," replied the farmer. "Don't think so bad as Squire nayther—only Muster Frost he say you'n up't no good. My girl she'rnt no fool, howzever; but wenches mun be looked after; and, tellin' no lie, you pulled her out o' staith when she were near sinkin'. She'rnt been the same since."—Here the farmer, quite exhausted by his long speech, took off his hat, from which he drew forth a handkerchief, and wiped the huge beads from his brow.

"And I am charged with decoying her from her home!" said Ernest—"by Frost, too!"

"Says you gat her in harness, and keep her in't, and you'n takin' her aff all oot," replied Clinton. "Don't mean she hairm, I hope. Her stick oot you wern hid

in her room yan night, when Squire Wordley han the search."

"In her room !"

"Muster Frost he think so ! but you wern, were you ?"

"No !—a thousand times, no !" exclaimed Ernest, vehemently.

"Wern 'ee in the house ?"

"Not then. She let me in just before, on my begging admittance ; and when they came up, I got out of the dairy-window, and went home across the fields."

"Jest what she say," cried Clinton, slapping his hand on his thigh.

"I have since met her several times," pursued Ernest, "but it has, as I told my uncle, always been by accident, and in public, without any attempt at concealment. I owe it to her, as well as myself, to let you know this."

The farmer scratched his head.—"Well, it seem feasible too !" he said, after a moment's cogitation. "I b'lieve Muster Frost's a bit too shairp, I do ! Yet don't know what's come o' she, that's truth. Wun't go to meetin', wun't hear o' Elder Trevor read the Word, but sit and mope constant. But you'n keep oot of her way a bit, young mairster, will 'ee ?"

"I'm not likely to see her again for some time," returned Ernest, who, though still exasperated, was softened by the parental uneasiness of the farmer. "But I give you my promise, if it will be any satisfaction."

"Sure-ly," said Clinton, "and take it kind of 'ee, too : so wish 'ee well, young gen'leman."

And with these words they parted.

Ernest remained on the spot, absorbed in thought, though his mind was made up as to the course he should pursue. The project which had long occupied his imagination, of seeking his fortune in the world, now took a

tangible shape, and became a necessity. Nor did he look on it with misgiving, or in any spirit of diffidence. If he felt regret at leaving Glynellan, it was because he was dismissed with disgrace, not from a hankering after its enjoyments. On the contrary, the spirit of independence natural to his character, now emancipated from the yoke of duty, recoiled from everything not won by his own hands. The provision which Mr. Glynn had promised he determined not to accept. Since he was to go, he would set out unaided, and no one should know either the hour of his departure or his destination. At the first dawn of morning, before any of the household were astir, he would bid adieu to Glynellan, and launch his little raft on the great, turbid sea of life.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE TRAMP.

LIGHT—the first glance of morning—was just kindling in the east, as Ernest started from his couch. A carpet-bag, containing such articles as he could strictly call his own, lay ready at hand, having been packed over-night; and eager to quit Mr. Glynn's roof, he soon completed his preparations. But before setting out, he commended himself to the care of that Power which had become his sole dependence, and which, even in that moment, he felt to be a safer reliance than friends, lands, or fortune.

Descending the stairs, he took a last look round the

hall, now swathed in deep shadow, and softly opening the door, passed out.

It was a lowering and dismal morning. Dark, rolling clouds, just tinged with the dawning light, hung from the heavens in fleecy masses, big with storm and rain. A mist lay on the earth, like a shroud, and the trees peered through it, as Ernest walked along, solemn and motionless, like mourners. A sullen gloom enveloped every object, and by degrees communicated itself, with strange power, to Ernest's mind, as if it were prophetic of his destiny.

There was much in his situation to awaken such a feeling, and to throw a shadow on the path before him. The hopes he had latterly been led to cherish, through the favour and even promises of his uncle, had been suddenly extinguished ; and he was parting from all he knew and loved, as well as from ties and friendships but too recently formed, for what must at best be a severe and protracted struggle. And, in his own dejection, he gave more than one thought to the hapless girl who had been the innocent cause of his disgrace, and for whose welfare he felt an interest as pure as it was sincere.

But when was youth long daunted or dispirited ? The Almighty Disposer, in His comprehensive providence, adapting our capacity to our need, beneficently endows that period of life with unfailing elasticity and hopefulness ; and the hard wisdom of man in vain holds up to our eyes the example of its own experience, as a lesson, a restraint, and a warning. Youth sees nothing in his onward career but the path to prosperity and success. The future may appear a blank to older men ; but to him, with the poetry of nature still throbbing in his breast, it seems full of promise ; and, like some fine picture

.

of Turner's, shows a thousand bright tints through its veil.

Ernest's spirits rallied at every step. Although, at first, he could elicit no augury of good from the leaden sky, imagination was not slow to supply a presage, which soothed, consoled, and cheered him ; and the sweet sentiment of Dibdin, none the less expressive for its homely dress, came forcibly to his mind—

“ Many a dark and cloudy morning
Turns out a sunshiny day.”

Memory recalled more than one example to confirm the poet's testimony, and flatter him with a similar prospect. To his eager mind and active ambition, difficulties, indeed, offered no discouragement, but rather appeared the stepping stones to dictinction. The thought of the solitary lad who, lying by the river-side, determined, by his own exertions, to recover the inheritance of his fathers, and carried out his pious resolution, lent him both courage and confidence ; and he did not reflect that every one is not a Warren Hastings, or that the great child of fortune, putting his genius aside, had the advantage of starting from a position peculiarly auspicious, under the protection of influential connexions, while he owed also no little obligation to the fortuitous aid of events. Ernest began the great struggle under circumstances far different—with but a few pounds in his purse, and not a single available friend in the world ! Yet, like the conqueror of India, he had what was better than money or friends—a vigorous intellect, a practical and well-stored mind, and a generous, courageous, and honest heart. If he had no one to attest these facts, nature, the best patron, had written them on his face. His frank, free look, his modest yet manly

bearing, his prepossessing address, appealing at once to the understanding and the feelings, disarmed mistrust, and inspired the most wary with confidence and faith. And to meet the difficulties before him, he possessed a cheerful and enduring disposition, a bold spirit, and an inexhaustible buoyancy of temperament, with a strong reliance on himself, and a stronger in Heaven.

Like all adventurers, he bent his steps towards London. His little stock of money, about twenty pounds—a gift he had received from his uncle some months before, on coming of age, would have admitted of his travelling by coach ; but he was too deeply impressed with the example of the standard adventurers of fiction, as they are represented in the pages of Smollett and Scott, not to prefer performing the journey on foot. Thought was busy in his mind, and he walked along for several hours, at a brisk pace, before he made a halt. Then he stopped to breakfast at a road-side inn, but after a brief rest, resumed his progress.

The sun, wading through a sea of cloud, like a weary bather, now shed a gleam of transient brightness over the landscape, and the change gave fresh animation to Ernest, as, aroused from his reflections, he cast his eye over the blooming hedges and the green fields, the waving corn, and the glorious old woods, inhaling with the balmy air the sweet inspiration of nature. Health and freedom came bounding down from the verdant hills, and dancing over the meadows, while the jocund skylark floated overhead, making the air resound with his melody, and all things rejoiced at the first faint smile of summer.

Evening found Ernest some way on his road, though it was, in fact, but a fraction of the long distance before him. Resting for the night at an inn, he rose with the dawn, and ere the day closed, had covered fifty miles from Glynellan. For several days he proceeded in the

same way, and at length, after an interval of a week, arrived, weary and footsore, at a small alehouse, which he conceived to be not very far from the end of his journey. Here, though appearances were not too inviting, he proposed to pass the night, and at once made his way to the public room, and threw himself into a chair.

Three men were seated together round an adjacent table, and looked up as he entered, but immediately renewed their conversation, leaving him to discuss his supper unobserved.

One of the party was a tall, gaunt, ungainly looking man, dressed in a somewhat worn suit of black, with trousers rather shrunk, showing a pair of cumbrous high-lows. His chair was tipped back on the hind legs, so as to form a sort of incline, and on this, reckless of all principles of equilibrio, he lounged back against the wall, having his large, clumsy feet hanging down in front, like a couple of balance-weights. His face wore an expression of mingled simplicity and cunning, to which the spectacles on his nose, evidently as much a fixture as the nose itself, gave a comic effect, though there was no want of intelligence on his large, broad brow, and the development of the head was exceedingly striking. He was addressed by his companions as Old Parr, which proved to be an abbreviation of Parkyns.

Next to him sat a short, spare man, looking all the smaller from the force of contrast. As if this were not enough, he wore a swallow-tailed coat, which, besides, was excessively short-waisted, and the effect, when he stood up, was to throw all his stature into his legs, leaving him scarcely any body. Blank and sullen features, a dull eye, at which the soul never looked out, and a leaden complexion, betokened one whose purposes it would be difficult to penetrate, and who fought in the lists of life with

his vizor down. To add to the disagreeable impression, he had a habit of fixing his eyes on his companions, whenever he looked up, in such a manner as called forcibly to mind the gaze of a snake, insomuch that it would not have been difficult to imagine he was about to make a spring, and fasten on them with his fangs.

The third man was of middle stature, and middle age ; and, though the day was warm, was muffled in one of those thick, stifling overalls, called a pea-jacket, buttoned up to the chin, and which, indeed, he wore throughout the year, without reference to summer or winter. He was lolling against the table, in the calm enjoyment of a pipe, only joining in the conversation by an occasional remark, not calculated to provoke discussion.

A scroll of paper, like a chart or building-plan, lay on the table, and, to an experienced eye, this, with something peculiar in their appearance, would have furnished a clue to the calling of the trio, who, in truth, belonged to a class which had just sprung into existence, in connexion with the vast railway works in progress, being assistants of the eminent civil engineer, Isaac Colville, and now engaged under his direction, on the Great Hirlemdown Railway.

"This is what I like," observed he of the leaden hue, who bore the name of Wormwood. "I wanted a friend, and if ever there was a person possessed in a remarkable degree of the qualities suited to friendship, here he sits."—And he laid his hand on the tall man's arm.—"Give us your paw, old fellow ! It's a comfort to feel the grasp of a good honest hand like your's—and the hand of a clever man, too, who'll come out strong some day. Parr—I don't care who knows it—I admire your abilities. Come, Blouser !"—and he nudged the pea-jacket with his elbow

—"let's drink old Parr in a mug of his own mixture. The health of Mr. Parkyns !"

"Upstanding, uncovered," responded Blouser. "Hip ! hip !—once more, hip !—another, all together—hip !"

Parkyns rose with as much solemnity as if he were about to address a multitude, and Ernest, whose attention had been attracted by the scene, was concerned to observe that his feelings were really touched, though it was evident he was only the butt of Wormwood.

"If I were merely to call this the proudest moment of my life," he exclaimed, "I should say but little ; for it is also the most agreeable, and I cannot sufficiently evince my gratification at the sentiments expressed by my worthy friend Wormwood. This I say without fear of contradiction. I appreciate and reciprocate Wormwood's friendship, and I venerate his exalted ideas in connexion with it. We're all engaged in a great work, and we work together ; we *pull* together, my boys ; we live in concord and are friends."

"Friends !" echoed Wormwood, fixing his eyes on the ceiling. "Isn't it so, Blouser ?"

"Go ahead !" cried Blouser.

"As to Wormwood's opinion of my abilities, I thank him," pursued Parkyns. "I believe I *have* had some experience on railroads, but whether I shall ever come out in the way Wormwood expects, is yet to be seen."—A cry of "hear, hear," from Wormwood.—"But I believe I've done my duty by the G. H. R., as we all have ; and we've made the contractors do their's. I. C. gets all the credit, but I should like to know who does the work. Granted, I. C. draws the plans, and they're not bad, but it's one thing to turn arches on paper, and another to turn them with bricks—as *we* do !"

"That's about it," observed Blouser. "Our side again!"

"I won't say anything about a certain person," remarked Wormwood, cautiously refraining from any direct allusion to Isaac Colville; "but this I will say—that the G. H. R. owes a good deal to you, old fellow! I'll speak up for my friend. Friendship has its duties, as well as its pleasures; and one of these is to uphold your friend's character and reputation. Old Parr, I respect you."

"Thank'ee, Wormwood, my boy," said Parkyns. "There are very few in the world for whom I entertain the same regard I do for you and our mutual friend Blouser; and few whose good opinion I so value. As for I. C., no one can think more highly of his abilities than I do, and I'm the last person in the world to underrate his bridges. But I've got an idea of a bridge myself, with an arch of a thousand feet span, which I think beats him hollow. I dropped an inkling of it once to old Butler, the contractor, and he offered me five hundred a year on the spot, to be his Clerk of Works. But, my boys, I'm a gentleman, and I'll only follow a gentleman's occupation. I'd rather be one of I. C.'s subs, at a nominal honorarium, than have a thousand a year from old Butler, or any other contractor. That's what I call acting like a gentleman!"—And with these words, he resumed his seat.

"You're a man of genius, old Parr," cried Wormwood. "There's poetry in what you say, and the genuine cream of friendship, which is the best cream going."

As he spoke, he gave a sly push to Parkyns's chair, which, resting only on the hind legs, immediately tipped over, and sent its occupant sprawling on the floor.

This mishap elicited a loud laugh from Blouser, which

broke into a roar when Wormwood, with an air of concern, sprang to Parkyns's assistance, in his hurry jostling purposely against the table, and knocking over a pewter mug, the contents of which descended on Parkyns's face.

"What are you about?" cried the fallen man, half drowned in porter.

"Ease her—stop her!" screamed Blouser.

"Hold your tongue, Blouser, can't you?" cried Wormwood, quite serious. "Are you hurt, old fellow? Here, catch hold!"—And seizing Parkyns's hand, he raised him up. "However did you turn up that way?"

"It's that confounded old chair," exclaimed Parkyns, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

"All serene!" said Blouser. "Off she goes!"—And he rose to depart.

"Don't go yet," said Wormwood. "Come, old Parr, sit down again, and make your life miserable. Why, what a fellow you are, to be upset by such a trifle. You're too sensitive by half. And look! you've spilt all the mixture. Let's replenish!"

"I'm not going to have any more," returned Parkyns, sulkily.—And he rang the bell.—"Here, landlord, what's to pay?"

"York, you're wanted," observed Blouser, tapping himself on the chest. And he paid his own share of the reckoning, and walked out.

"What a bore!" said Wormwood, after rummaging all his pockets. "I changed my waistcoat this morning, and must have left my money in it. Parr, my boy, you pay for me, and I'll give it you again."

"You owe me ever so much already," said the ruffled Parkyns.

"My dear fellow, do you throw it up to me?" muttered

Wormwood—"a gentleman like you! Is this acting like a friend?"

Somewhat pacified by this appeal, but still grumbling, Parkyns paid the score, and sallied forth, with Wormwood clinging affectionately to his arm; and Ernest, stepping to the window, saw them join Blouser without, and all walk off together.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT HIRLEMDOWN RAILWAY.

THE year 1838 was the epoch of railways. Great lines were in course of construction in every quarter, and there was not a town of any importance, from one end of the country to the other, that had not its railway in progress or in contemplation. Railways were the rage, and never was there so good a rage before.

Of all the projects on foot, the Great Hirlemdown Railway, intended to connect the metropolis with the rising city of Hirlemdown, was one of the best and greatest. The originality of its design, the marked peculiarities of its structure, and its extraordinary magnitude, had attracted universal attention; and scientific men watched its progress with especial interest. The line was already marked out, and the levels laid, through its whole extent; the ground was partially broken in numerous places, and bridges and viaducts were rising at various points, like advanced posts, to attest, by their dimensions, its colossal

and massive character. Thousands of men were engaged on the works, and wherever its engineers appeared, the country became alive with bustle, traffic, and population.

As Ernest proceeded on his way, he was not slow to observe this vitality ; but his route lying over a part of the line hidden in a cutting, it was not till he reached the bridge thrown across it that the great undertaking met his view. Then, though the cutting was of insignificant depth, he looked down on the imperfect road with a feeling of wonder, as if its extent and character had but that moment entered his mind. After a brief pause, he strolled along by the side of the line for some twenty yards, that he might look back at the face of the bridge, and note the general effect. There was a party of five men in the cutting, three of whom, as he drew nearer, he recognised as the guests at the inn on the previous day—Wormwood, Parkyns, and Blouser ; and the other two were of the labouring class, and ran hither and thither, with a measuring tape in their hands, as they were directed. The engineers, in fact, were taking the dimensions of the cutting, a task of some difficulty, as owing to the inequalities of the ground above, its depth varied with every few yards.

“Here you are,” cried Parkyns to Wormwood : “throw the tape across here, or you won’t get the mean.”

“It’s very mean of you to say so,” said Wormwood, who was a bad punster. “Ha ! ha ! ha !”

The two attendants echoed the laugh ; but it fell dead on the ear of Parkyns, who appreciated no jokes but his own ; while Blouser, however well inclined, was extremely dense in this respect.

“Well, let it stand for the present,” said Parkyns ; “and being on duty, I vote we send for something to eat.”

“Carried, nem. con.,” cried Wormwood, always ready

for a regale. "As a friend, I support your proposition, G. H. R. being paymaster."

"Only we mustn't be too strong," observed Parkyns. "We've had a can of mixture already, remember."

"All goes down for refreshments," replied Wormwood; "and G. H. R.'s got a long purse."

"No friends—hit him again!" remarked Blouser.

"Perhaps we'd better finish the job first," said Parkyns, "though I'm so dry, I'm almost choking. Here, you Riley, just give me some mixture."

"Ah! then you're a funny gentleman, Mr. Parkyns, sir," replied the attendant, a good-humoured Irishman. "Sure, Mr. Blouser's drained out the can, sir."

"Gently over the stones, Pat," cried Blouser. "Last horse, last drink."

"And Riley was certainly the last horse himself," said Wormwood, who had no liking for the Irishman, "or perhaps I should say the last ass. I saw his gills in the can directly you laid it down."

"Ah! then it's yourself 'ud make a cow laugh, Mr. Wormwood, sir," said Riley. "Sure, you know I'm a timperance man, and dursn't dhrink any liquor stronger nor wather."

"Do you mean to say I didn't see the spout in your mouth?"

"May-be you did, sir; but do you know what I was doin' wid it?"

"Sucking it like a leech."

"Faix, I can't help laughin', Mr. Wormwood, sir, you're such a funny gentleman. No! but I was doin' penance wid it, sir."

"Penance!"

"Jest that same, sir, and I'll tell you my raisins for it. When I obsarved you takin' such a pull—"

"Me, you vagabond!" said Wormwood, while Parkyns and Blouser laughed at his chagrin.

"Sure, you was dhry, sir," rejoined Pat, amidst renewed applause from Parkyns and Blouser—"very dhry you war, no doubt. And as I was tellin' your honour, when I obsarved you takin' such a dhrink"—here Wormwood burst out again—"I'll spake the rale truth," pursued Pat, "I wished it was myself; for I was scorched to a cinder. Then, says I, Pat, says I, wouldn't you like a dhrop of the mixture now? If you plaise, darlint, says I. Then it isn't much of it you'll taste, you spalpeen, says I. Are you after mindin' the pledge you took of the blessed Father Matthew? says I. Now, jest take up the can, says I, and put it to your mout, and dhrink a dhrop of it at your peril, my jewel, says I: and I hope every dhrop 'ull go down into your carcase like bog-wather, says I. So I up's with the spout, sir—"

"And emptied the can," observed Parkyns, good-temperedly.

"It's quite clear Riley isn't to be trusted," said Wormwood, "and in future, the can had better be carried by Wilkinson."

"Sure your honour," began Pat—

"You shall keep it, Pat," cried Parkyns—"never fear. And now, come, if we're to finish, we'd better go on. Here, Wilkinson, take the end of the tape, and hold it down over there, at the foot of the slope."

The tape was stretched across, and Parkyns was stooping to ascertain the width, when Wormwood, who had an ape's predilection for mischief, and was now in a spiteful humour, knocked his hat over his eyes, at the same time exclaiming—"Now, Blouser, what are you at?"

"Mild!" cried Blouser, in a warning voice—"draw it mild, old fellow!"

"I'll tell you what it is, Wormwood, I won't stand this chaff," said Parkyns, in a rage. "Why don't you play off your jokes on Blouser? You know he won't stand it, and I won't either. I'm a gentleman, and I insist on being treated as such."

"And don't I always do so?" said Wormwood. Every one can see you're a gentleman, without your mentioning it; besides which, I respect your talents, and have a great friendship for you. But—"

He broke off abruptly, and catching up the tape, commenced measuring with great assiduity, while Blouser mechanically took down the dimensions, and Parkyns, not yet restored to good humour, looked sulkily on. Ernest continued to watch their proceedings; and having picked up some practical knowledge from his uncle's surveyor, by attending him on various occasions, soon saw they were going wrong.

"You'll never get the average there," he cried, in a frank, good-natured way. "You must measure here, and a few yards further on, at the top, bottom, and centre."

All looked up at these words.

"Hilloa, Daniel! where have you come from?" cried Parkyns.

"Your ma' aware of your being out?" asked Blouser.

"Why don't you do what he tells you?" cried a voice from the opposite side.

The inquiry seemed to petrify the whole party, with the single exception of Wormwood, who, indeed, had discerned the speaker, before he had reached the spot, and so had had time to assume an appearance of diligence. He thought it politic, however, to pretend surprise, when, on raising his eyes, he saw on the bank Isaac Colville himself, attended by two of his principal assistants.

The great engineer was somewhat below the middle

stature, of a compact and closely-set frame, to which a rather large head, slightly inclined on one side, seemed appropriately fitted. A fresh and ruddy complexion made his face appear handsome, though the features were by no means regular ; and it borrowed a light and animation from his quick, thoughtful eye, which added to the agreeable impression. He wore a long blue surtout, almost approaching to a greatcoat ; and as he stood on the edge of the bank, with his hands crossed behind, looking down into the cutting, he reminded Ernest of the picture of Napoleon at St. Helena—an effect, perhaps, not altogether accidental.

On the right of the autocrat was his grand vizier, Mr. Hammer, who, from his usually appearing in a yellow macintosh, was known on the line by the soubriquet of the Yellow-hammer. He was a tall, good-conditioned-looking man, with a sanctimonious cast of countenance, indicative of his taste for amateur preaching ; and, though apparently so much in favour, did not really stand high with his master, who appraised his mediocrity at its right value, and used him merely as an overseer.

The other aide-de-camp was a young man, very tall and very thin, with that bowed and drooping chest, so often met with in this country, which tells its own story of disease. His name was Pool, and as he made it a point never to commit himself in speech, always confining his conversation to a few set phrases, he had been described by Parkyns, in one of his convivial moments, as a very smooth Pool, which would never drown anybody.

In the panic occasioned by the appearance of the triumviri, the party below, instead of acting on Ernest's suggestion, became so confused, that they went back to their old measurements, directly in the face of what they had been told.

"You see they don't understand you," cried the great man to Ernest. "Why don't you show them?"

Ernest was down the cutting in an instant. Taking the tape from the obsequious hand of Wormwood, and throwing the end of it to Pat Riley, he ran to the proper spots, before Mr. Hammer, who had hastened to show his zeal in the presence of his chief, could hurry down the slope, and having accomplished his object, entered the dimensions in Wormwood's memorandum-book.

"Have you done it?" inquired Mr. Colville.

"Yes sir," replied Ernest, with an instinctive perception of the authority he was addressing.

"Bring it here, then."

Ernest scrambled quickly up the slope, and presented it.

"How long have you been on the line?" asked Mr. Colville. "I don't remember having seen you before."

"No, sir, I am not engaged on the line. I——"

"A mistake!" said Mr. Colville, with a smile. "Well, sir, we are much obliged to you for your kind assistance, and I must apologize for pressing you into the service. May I ask what line you are employed on?"—And his eye ran over him with a look of interest, which brought a glow to Ernest's cheek.

"I have never been on any, sir," replied the young man. "I am afraid this will be a poor recommendation to you, but I am in search of employment, and make bold to ask if you can give me anything to do?"

"No, no—there is no opening," interposed Mr. Hammer. And he added to Mr. Colville—"We have already too many young men, sir."

Ernest's hopes had run high, and as they were thus dashed to the ground, he turned an appealing look on Mr. Colville.

The great man mused a moment. Genius, whatever

its infirmities, is rarely deaf to human sympathy, particularly when it pleads for merit.

"You've no knowledge of engineering?" he said at length.

"No, sir."

"Well, let me see—yes, I do want some one there, and it only requires common intelligence. I'm thinking of the Brawl viaduct, Mr. Hammer. Now, they are turning the arches, I must have somebody to see the cement is properly mixed, and the earth well rammed in between the buttresses. Send this gentleman there."

"Very well, sir."

"Don't you think it will be a good plan, Mr. Pool?" asked Mr. Colville.

"I'm sure your better judgment must be correct, sir," replied the cautious Pool.

"Then, Mr. — you didn't tell me your name?"

"Glynn, sir."

"Glynn—thank you. Mr. Glynn had better go to the viaduct at once, Mr. Hammer. Say to-morrow."

"Be at my office at Markford, at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, if you please," said Hammer to Ernest.

"Mr. Hammer will then give you your instructions, Mr. Glynn," observed the chief. "And now, good morning."

And he walked along towards the bridge, followed by his two aides.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS.

THE office of Mr. Hammer was easily discovered, though it was twenty miles distant ; but the whole country being in some way connected with the railroad, everybody knew the Yellow-hammer—some by his coat, and not a few by his doctrine. A stage-coach, not yet become historic, but having a moody idea that its days were numbered, carried Ernest to the little town of Markford, where Mr. Hammer resided, and which was the head-quarters for a certain portion of the line, constructing under his immediate superintendence.

Punctually at nine o'clock, the hour appointed, Ernest presented himself at the office—a detached villa, distinguished by a flagstaff on the roof, to which a red flag, emblazoned with the unvarying G. H. R., the Company's *Senatus Populusque Romanus*, gave a rather striking appearance. Inquiring for Mr. Hammer, he was shown into a room, fitted with a long deal drawing-table against the window, and containing two or three high stools, where he remained several hours, till at last, supposing he had been forgotten, he ventured to look into the passage in quest of a servant, that he might ascertain his chance of an audience. Opposite was another room, and through the open doorway he saw three young men, very stylishly dressed, seated together at a drawing-table, ostensibly looking over architectural plans and sections, but, in fact, endeavouring to banish *ennui* by jerks of

conversation. These were Mr. Hammer's pupils, with whom he had received considerable sums of money, as a premium for instructing them in what, as it proved, he knew very little about, and even if he had been ever so proficient, had no time to communicate. They all honoured Ernest with an impudent stare ; but, undaunted by this reception, he was about to make known the object he had in view, when Mr. Hammer himself appeared in the passage, and spared him the humiliation.

"Oh ! you ?" he said, without noticing Ernest's recognition. And hurrying into the room, he lounged back against the drawing-table, leaving his visitor at the door.

"Well, you know what you've got to do," he continued. "The Brawl viaduct, where you are to be stationed, is one of the most important works on the line. The arches are of great span, and it is necessary that the cement used in their construction should be particularly good. You will be responsible that it is made of one measure of cement to every measure of sand. You will also see that the contractors for the adjoining embankment have the earth well rammed in between the buttresses, as well as on the outside, keeping the height within and without constantly at the same level, so that the pressure against the brickwork may be equal on both sides. Finally, you must be on the works from six in the morning till six in the evening, leaving only at such hours as the men go away for refreshment."

"I shall not fail to attend, sir," replied Ernest.

"You'd better not," said Mr. Hammer, significantly. "As to—to wages," he continued, using the most humbling term he could think of, "you'll be placed on the same footing as the other assistants."

"That is more consideration than I expected," said

Ernest, "but I hope, by diligence and attention, to make up, in some measure, for my want of knowledge—or, at least, to leave no room for complaint."

"If you do, you'll be sent about your business, that's all," said Mr. Hammer, who, while he wished to impress Ernest with an exalted notion of his consequence, secretly resented his nomination by Mr. Colville. "But you now know how you stand with the Company: do you know how you stand with eternity?"

Ernest looked up astonished.

"Are you aware you've got a soul?" pursued Mr. Hammer.

"Fully, sir."

"Then, remember you have to provide for your soul as well as for your body—that the one requires food and clothing as well as the other. You may go now. The contractors for the works have been apprised of your appointment and of your duties. You will, therefore, find everything ready for you; and while you are doing your daily work, think, I say again, of your *eternal* work. My son, Master Julius Hammer Hammer, aged six years, has written something in connexion with this subject, which you may read with much profit; and as I have given a copy to every one employed on the line, I believe it has done a great deal of good."

So saying, he presented Ernest with a tract, bearing the title of "A Dialogue with an Anabaptist," and recording a severe discussion between himself and his son, which resulted in the conversion of the latter to the tenets of Anabaptism. The argument was doubtless drawn up by an author of larger growth than Master Julius Hammer Hammer, though not less a child; and Mr. Hammer, whose doctrine it vindicated, had been so indefatigable in disseminating the tract, that, if any

reliance might be placed on the title-page, it had now reached its "twentieth thousand."

With this spoil in his hand, Ernest marched out of the office, glad to draw a free breath in the air.

The Brawl viaduct, he now found, was about two miles from the spot where he had met Mr. Colville, so that he would have to retrace his steps ; but the same coach passed through Dartmill, a village within sight of the works, and anxious to reach his destination as soon as possible, he lost no time in securing a place.

There are worse conveyances, even in the present day, than a four-horse coach constructed on the clipper principle, and in point of speed, Ernest's vehicle was certainly no tortoise. It was still light when he arrived at Dartmill, and, though no one was now on the works, he paused only to drop his bag at the inn, and then proceeded to the line, impatient to behold the scene of his future duties.

The sight which burst upon him was indeed a novel one. The little valley of the Brawl, lying in the midst of verdant slopes, crowned with woods, and traversed by its peaceful stream, looking like a vein of silver, was cut in two by a prodigious embankment, rising, in the bed of the valley, to a height of sixty feet. This mountain of earth was divided, as it approached the rivulet, by a range of brickwork, spanning the Brawl and its banks with colossal arches, of which, however, only the first ring of bricks was yet turned. Here, then, was the viaduct, and, as Ernest drew nearer, he observed that the embankment on each side, though very close, was not yet united with the brickwork, except at the bottom, so that he saw at once what remained to be done, and how it was to be executed. The part assigned to him in these operations was a humble one ; but it was something to be concerned even remotely in such a vast undertaking, and he

felt that after all, the safety of the whole depended, in great measure, on the vigilance, zeal, and attention with which he discharged his trust.

Morning found him at the works among the earliest comers. But, at the very outset, a difficulty presented itself on which he had not reckoned, and at the foot of the scaffolding, he became sensible, for the first time, that it required something more than courage to ascend the tapering ladders with expedition and agility. The summit was at length reached, and he stood on the crown of an arch, installed in his new functions.

To the uninitiated, the sphere of his duty might seem to offer but few points of interest, but Ernest found it otherwise ; and, indeed, it suggested, in its various details, a thousand scientific inquiries, to which the works in progress enabled him to obtain an explicit and practical answer. In short, it did not require much discernment to see that he was in a situation to learn the craft of the engineer, without the probation of apprenticeship.

In the midst of his avocations, he was surprised, in passing along the scaffold, to encounter Wormwood, who, it may be observed here, was suspected of playing the part of a spy for Mr. Hammer, and was said to be in the habit of reporting to that authority all the little omissions and derelictions of his brother assistants, together with any disparaging observations respecting Mr. Hammer himself, which might be made in his hearing—not unfrequently under his subtle prompting.

“How do you do?” he said to Ernest, in the most friendly way. “Mr. Hammer desired me to meet you here, and give you any information you might want.”

“Thank you, I don’t know that I want any at present,” replied Ernest. “Mr. Hammer’s instructions are so complete.”

"Ah, I dare say, sir : they usually are. A monstrous clever man, Mr. Hammer, sir."

"I have no doubt of it."

"He's a very peculiar man—in fact, a character," pursued Wormwood, feeling his way. "Some of our people don't like him, and, as we all make a point of speaking without reserve, I have heard him handled rather roughly. There may, I don't deny, be something curious in his manners."—And he fixed his basilisk gaze on Ernest, as if to dive into his heart.

"You think so?" said Ernest.

"Oh, dear no! I don't say it is my own opinion," said the snake, recoiling, "but it may be true as regards others, though I can't say I have observed it myself. But *you* don't think so?"

"I have seen so little of him, it is hardly fair to say."

"Ah! you are cautious, I see. Well, I like that. Every one here is so communicative, it isn't safe to open your mouth; or what you say, passing from one to another, may be turned into something quite different from what you mean. This makes one feel the want of a friend—a friend whom one can trust, and respect, and consult. A friend is an inestimable possession, sir."

"A true friend must be."

"You have an exact perception of my meaning," exclaimed Wormwood. "That's a most curious thing, and you can't conceive how gratifying it is to me—so seldom do I meet any one who understands me. Do you know, Mr. Glynn, I have peculiar ideas on the subject of friendship? I consider it a sacred sentiment."

"That is viewing it in a proper light, certainly."

"No doubt, and in my opinion it can't be too exalted. You've seen the play of 'Gisippus,' I presume."

"No, but I know the story."

"Well, the only person who ever came up to my notion of a friend was Gisippus. There was a friend for you, if you like ; and I am a Gisippus."

"You take a high standard, but I think he carried friendship a little too far."

"Not a bit. I would act myself in the very same way to-morrow to serve a friend. I've studied the character of that man, sir, and can repeat the part from first to last. I want some one to whom I can be a Gisippus—to whom I can devote myself. Now it's a curious thing, but I've had a most extraordinary feeling draw me towards you, Mr. Glynn, from the first moment I saw you. Isn't it strange?"

"Very," said Ernest, drily.

"Ah ! you don't believe in such things—the secret sympathies of congenial souls," returned Wormwood, with a short cough. "Well, it is the way of the world, Mr. Glynn—all the same, all the same ! But we were speaking of Mr. Hammer. Did you remark what a deep interest he takes in the religious welfare of those around him. I dare say he inquired if you were aware you had a soul?"

"He certainly did."

"An interesting question—very, and a serious one, too."—And Wormwood looked as if he were going to fasten on Ernest's throat. "And that tract of Master Julius Hammer's," he continued, as Ernest remained silent, "is a most remarkable production to be written at the tender age of six."—And a sardonic smile was just perceptible on his lip.—"Mr. Hammer presented you with a copy, no doubt?"

"He did."

"Have you read it?"

"Not yet."

“ Well, Mr. Glynn, it’s——”

But at this moment Wormwood received a tremendous slap on the back, which almost sent him over the scaffold; and at the same time his ear was saluted by a strange sound, resembling the danger-signal of a locomotive, and announcing the presence of his coadjutors Parkyns and Blouser. The latter, from whom this salutation emanated, instantly, without further notice of Wormwood, seized the hand of Ernest, giving it a hearty shake as he said—“How’s your feelins?”

“Our worthy colleague Blouser, sir,” explained Wormwood, rather annoyed at the interruption, but afraid to show umbrage to the pea-jacket. “And this is Mr. Parkyns—old Parr, we call him, from his having first introduced the celebrated life-mixture, compounded of ginger-beer and pale ale.”

“Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Glynn,” observed Parkyns. “My friend Blouser’s a rough specimen, but you’ll find him a thorough gentleman. We haven’t all got the polish of Wormwood, sir.”

Ernest was amused to see such a change in the demeanour of Parkyns towards Wormwood—a change the more apparent, perhaps, at this moment, as he was greatly annoyed that his junior had been selected to meet Ernest on the works.

“And don’t stand so high with the Yellow-hammer—can’t put salt on his tail,” said Parkyns, growing desperate.

“Which nobody *can* deny,” observed Blouser.

“You’re both talking riddles, my boys,” said Wormwood. “But we’re interrupting Mr. Glynn, and I dare say he will gladly dispense with our company.”—And he moved off, to avoid a retort.

“Walker,” remarked Blouser to Parkyns. “Ditto. The same to you.”

"I'm quite ready," answered Parkyns, still rather excited. "We've started him, and that's all I wanted. Good morning, Mr. Glynn. We meet again at Philippi—the King's Head : chair taken at eight precisely."

"Will I be after bringin' on some more mixtur, sir?" asked Pat Riley, who was standing in the rear with his can.

"Do, Pat," replied Parkyns, "and if you happen by chance, to spill any in your mouth, don't fill up the can with water. I know you're a temperance man, and I don't dispute the valuable properties of water, but somehow, they don't combine well with beer. The two fluids are essentially inimical."

"Och', sure, any fool 'ud know that, your honour. Do you think I'd be after spilin' the wather with beer, Mr. Parkyns, sir?"

"No, Pat, but you spoil the beer with water."

"Troth, your honour, must have your joke, anyhow ; and if I was dyin' you'd make me laugh out at you, so you would ! But it's my b'lief, you'd find the same with the blessed Father Mattew himself, if he was always carryin' a can of mixtur."

And touching his hat to Ernest, Pat followed Parkyns off the scaffold.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BRAWL VIADUCT.

THE viaduct and embankment progressed steadily, though slowly, and meanwhile, Ernest, with work of all kinds going on around him, enjoyed a thousand opportunities of augmenting his practical efficiency. In a short time he learnt levelling and the use of the theodolite, and was able to draw a plan of a bridge, and estimate the cost of its construction. Parkyns and Blouser readily instructed him in all they knew, and he found the same willingness in the agents and superintendents of the contractors ; but Wormwood, while he made no end of friendly professions, uniformly evaded giving any information. Soon, however, he found himself in the background and was often glad to seek aid from the more alert judgment of Ernest.

But it was not in engineering alone that Ernest enlarged his fund of knowledge. The colossal embankment which was now fast closing on the viaduct, an Alps of art, had been dug up from as vast a cutting, and in this excavation he found leisure to pursue the interesting researches of geology. In the mines of Wales he had looked into the limestone and the coal : here, in the broader light of day, he beheld the diluvium, the clays, and the chalk. Often he stood in rapt contemplation of this marvellous and most terrible history. Full of suggestion indeed was its half-faded writing, and, from the wreck of worlds, he turned with a calmer spirit to the

littleness of his own occupations, elevated and refined in his views, and impressed alike by the solemn inspiration of religion, and the beautiful lessons of philosophy.

Gradually his task at the viaduct drew to a completion. The arches, which from their great span had excited no little apprehension, were now well set, and the centres being lowered, the massive structure stood exposed to view, a rare combination of elegance and solidity. In honour of the event, the contractors gave their workmen a holiday, and for one day, operations were suspended on that portion of the line.

It was a bright morning, as if Nature, too, made holiday, and Ernest enjoyed, as only those who are constantly occupied can, the luxury of an idle day. But as evening came on, with thoughts still clinging to his duty, he strolled along by the side of the works, in proud contemplation of their appearance. The spectacle was one that might well excite interest, and suggest reflection. A noble achievement of science, a wondrous result of labour, it was, at the same time, a grand revelation of human progress. Soon that lofty causeway, constructed under his eye, would traverse the country like an artery, disseminating a new stream of wealth, like fresh blood, through the length and breadth of the land. The miraculous element of steam would draw along its road of iron a whole host of travellers, carrying the beneficent influences of civilization to the remotest nooks—a comet with its train of light! Far more swiftly would the electric wire, the girdle of the new highway, diffuse, on lightning wings, the same benign effects, annihilating time and space, and uniting all men in a common bond of brotherhood.

If we looked back with wonder at the Appian roads of

the Romans, which remain among the proudest monuments of their enterprise and genius, how would posterity, in the lapse of ages, regard this triumph of later times? Here was a road towering over valleys and tunnelled through mountains, which would only perish, as far as human judgment could foresee, with the soil on which it rested. The thought was suggestive, and instinctively Ernest's eye turned on the ground, wandering over it with a half-abstracted glance. Suddenly light gleamed in his look, kindling his face with startled interest. He stooped down, and remained a moment with his eyes fixed on the turf: THE GROUND WAS SLIPPING! He traced a crack, as yet but imperfectly marked, alongside the whole length of the embankment. The mighty fabric of earth, as it acquired cohesion, was pressing out the natural soil, driving away its own foundation: the subsidence would soon be felt at its junction with the viaduct; as the embankment slipped down, it would tear away the buttresses; and in a few hours the stately achievement of the builder, to which he had just attributed a more than Egyptian stability, would be a heap of ruins.

For a moment, Ernest was confounded at this unexpected casualty. But it was not a time to hesitate, and he quickly decided on the course he should pursue. Flying to the inn, he despatched expresses to Mr. Colville and Mr. Hammer, briefly stating what he had discovered, at the same time sending for Parkyns, Wormwood, and Blouser, that he might have the advantage of their assistance and advice in such a great emergency. He also addressed a note to the agent of the contractor, requiring his immediate presence at the works.

The agent, Mr. Shorter, a plain, precise-looking man, the very embodiment of a practical idea, even his

whiskers being adjusted in a matter-of-fact way, promptly attended, and learnt the critical situation of the viaduct.

"What you say, is no doubt correct, sir," he observed, in reply to Ernest's statement, "but that is no business of mine. Our people engaged to build the viaduct, and they have built it: if the embankment breaks away the brickwork, the fault does not rest with us."

"But you're bound to lend me your aid to preserve it," rejoined Ernest.

"I am willing to do so."

"You recognise my authority?"

"Certainly. You are the representative of the Company here."

"And you concur with me, that nothing can be done, unless we take measures to arrest the slip at once?"

"I am quite of that opinion."

"Then I order you to clear out the earth from the buttresses of the viaduct, and to lighten the top of the embankment, by throwing the earth down on the subsiding side, so as to extend the slope beyond where the ground has slipped. You must instantly put on your whole force, and work all night."

"You will please to give me these instructions in writing, sir, stating you take upon yourself the whole responsibility of the proceeding."

"That is but reasonable. You shall have it at once."

"Then, your orders shall be obeyed."

Night was coming on, but, through the untiring efforts of Ernest, scarcely an hour had elapsed, ere a large body of men were on the works, carrying out his energetic measures. Fires blazed along the bank, illuminating the surrounding country, and throwing a lurid glare, like the

reflection of a volcano, on the dark and lowering sky. Teams of horses moved to and fro, dragging along the rugged tramway heavy loads of earth from the interior of the buttresses, which were shot rapidly over the bank, while hundreds of navvies, under their several gangers, worked away with their picks, and heaped up a fresh supply. Ernest stood in the midst of the brickwork, the point of greatest importance, stimulating the workmen, as they cleared away the earth, by his presence and example. Here, at length, when the night had far waned, he was joined by the other three assistants.

"Why, Glynn, my boy, what's all this?" cried Parkyns.

"Who ordered it?" demanded Wormwood, his eyes preparing for a spring.

Ernest hastily explained.

"What a go!" observed Blouser.

"I hope you all approve of what I have done?" said Ernest.

"Egad, I don't know what to say to it, my dear fellow," answered Parkyns, "and that's the truth. I hope I. C. will bear you out."

"I don't think he will," said Wormwood. "I wouldn't stand in Glynn's shoes for a trifle."

"What do *you* think of it, Blouser?" asked Ernest.

"Stunnin!" said Blouser.

"You approve?"

"Whole hog," said Blouser, emphatically.

"It's a great satisfaction for me to know you do," returned Ernest, "as I value your opinion, and it confirms me in my own."

"Put on the steam," said Blouser.

"I hope it's all right," observed Parkyns, a little ashamed; "but I once got into a tremendous scrape with

a similar thing on the Grand Trunk Line, where I saved a superb bridge, and got the bullet the next day. I then determined never to originate anything again."

"Why, this is something new," observed Wormwood, incredulously. "How is it you've never told us of it before?"

"*Mister* Wormwood," answered Parkyns, turning very red, "I beg you'll keep your observations to yourself. There are many things I've done which I have never told you, and never shall. As a gentleman, I can only be understood by gentlemen. But you're Glynn's friend: why don't you stand by him now, when your friendship may be useful?"

"Because I don't approve of what he's done," answered Wormwood, pertly.

"And is that acting like Gisippus?" asked Parkyns.

"Good!" said Blouser. "Sold again!"

"It's no matter," observed Ernest. "I take the whole onus of the thing on myself: I'm only glad to have Blouser's opinion that I've acted right."

"And have you sent for I. C. and the Yellow-hammer?" asked Parkyns.

"Yes."

"Then, let's have some refreshments.—Riley!"

"Here you are, your honour," answered Riley, producing his can.

"What, have you got some?"

"Sure, I knew your honours couldn't do without mixtur," replied Pat: "and so I brought some up wid me, good luck to it! By the same token——"

"Never mind the token," observed Parkyns, "but run down to the King's Head, and tell them to send up supper for four, and put it down to the Company."

"Ay, ay, your honour," answered Pat. And he muttered as he moved off—"Sure I may as well say for *five* while I'm about it, so I might! Arrah! So I will, too!"

The supper, which was not only enough for five, but for a dozen (the G. H. R. being in high odour at the inn), soon made its appearance, and Parkyns, Wormwood, and Blouser at once set to, and regaled themselves. Ernest, too conscientious to feast at the expense of the Company, and thinking only of the work in hand, declined to participate in the repast, remaining immovable at his post.

Suddenly there was a lull among the workmen, and the party at supper jumped up, not without a hint, dexterously telegraphed by Riley, as to who was approaching. It was Mr. Hammer.

In a moment he was under the arch of the buttress, confronting Ernest.

"Is Mr. Colville here?" he inquired, quickly.

"No, sir."

"Then what are you doing? Who has ordered all this?"

"I have, sir."

"You?"

"Yes, sir. I was afraid of the viaduct being torn down before I could receive your instructions, and I ventured to act on my own responsibility."

"*Your* responsibility. Who gave *you* any responsibility?"

"I thought—"

"You'd no business to think, sir," cried the Yellowhammer, with the look of a kite.

"Mr. Glynn, I told you," observed Wormwood, in a very gentle voice, "I was afraid that——"

"I really am surprised, Mr. Wormwood," cried Mr. Hammer, "that this proceeding should be sanctioned by you."

"By me, sir!" said Wormwood, fixing his eyes. "Not by me, I assure you. I told Mr. Glynn, I did not, and could not sanction it."

"Then who has?"

"Name of Blouser," said Blouser, stepping forward.

"I think it right to state, sir, that I alone am responsible," observed Ernest. "Mr. Blouser, though he believed I had acted for the best, has in no way interfered, and the contractor has but obeyed my orders. I saw the crack in the ground, and thought the only way to arrest the slip was to clear out the buttresses, and lighten the embankment."

"And you thought right," said a loud, clear voice. "You have saved the viaduct, and I highly approve of your conduct."

There was a moment's pause, when a loud cheer rang along the bank, as the workmen recognised Mr. Colville.

CHAPTER XV.

ENGLISH AND IRISH.

THE measures originated by Ernest effectually arrested the landslip, and gave the embankment permanence and stability. This result, however, was not the work of a day, or a few hours, but though the effect, to a certain extent, was immediate, occupied a considerable time, and

was frequently interrupted by minor difficulties, not easily comprehended by unprofessional minds. At length, all obstacles were overcome, and the undertaking completed.

Ernest was now removed to another part of the line, where the work of construction being finished, Mr. Colville had commenced the operation of laying down the rails. Such a task, to one of any experience, might seem simple enough, but in this case it was really far otherwise, the rails being laid on a new principle, on longitudinal sleepers, and requiring, from various causes, unremitting attention on the part of the engineer. Wormwood was joined with Ernest in the duty, and they relieved each other night and day, sometimes remaining up together all night, when, from any unforeseen circumstance, the work called for an extraordinary degree of vigilance. Blouser and Parkyns superintended an adjoining tract, and an old tiled hovel, by the side of a canal, the deserted lair of a brickmaker, served as an office for all.

Ernest was now brought into much closer contact with the navvies, and saw more of them, as a class, in a few days, than he had ever seen before. Familiar as he was with the low moral condition of the miners and iron-workers of the West, the desperate character and demoralized habits of these reckless men took him completely by surprise, and he could not but wonder that, in the nineteenth century, in the midst of a community foremost in every good work, such ignorance and barbarism could exist. Melancholy, indeed, it was to see a peasantry so brutalized and degraded, retaining nothing of humanity but its form. Among them the name of God was never pronounced but in execration and blasphemy ; the mind recognised no scruple of morality or religion ; and, in domestic life, the sacred tie of marriage was unknown. Every base passion, every pernicious habit, every low,

grovelling, and debasing vice by which human nature can be tainted and defiled, here stood forth in its most hideous aspect, unproved and unchecked ; and the very labour which, under proper direction, might have been made a means of elevation, became an additional cause of debasement, being pursued without intermission night and day, even on Sunday, under the stimulus of beer and gin, till the men were constantly either stupified or intoxicated, and threw off alike restraint and shame.

Among the various gangs were many Irishmen, and, to the other causes of quarrel which were continually arising, that of nationality, the most bitter of all, was soon added. The Irish working under price, were naturally regarded as intruders, and a bad feeling grew up, which, pervading both parties, was always ready to break out on the slightest provocation. Sometimes the Irish, sometimes the English, were the aggressors, and the result was always a fight, embittering the combatants still further against each other, and rendering the breach wider and wider. On one of these occasions Ernest had been appealed to, and had decided in favour of the Irish, who, as it happened, were at the moment in the right, though an hour afterwards he might have given a verdict against them ; but no one paused to inquire whether his decision was just and impartial : they only cared to know which side he was on. From that day, he was adopted as a champion by the Irish, and, unknown to himself, became the object of all those feelings of devotion so readily excited in the Irish heart, while, on the other hand, he was cordially detested by the English, who looked upon him, through the distorted medium of their prejudices, as the patron of the Irish, and a betrayer and persecutor of his own countrymen.

One night Ernest and Wormwood were both on duty,

and had retired for a few moments to the office, to consult on some point of difficulty, when a tremendous uproar was heard without, and Pat Riley, for once without his can, rushed in breathless, exhibiting unmistakable marks of punishment.

"Och, run for your life, Mr. Glynn, dear!" he cried. "They're comin' down on us like mad, swearin' vengeance, and they'll take it sure enough. Hear to 'em!"

"What is it!" cried Wormwood, turning pale, and half making for the door.

"Sure it's Mr. Glynn they're after," cried Pat. "And, whist! how he sits there, as if it was a wake we was at. And maybe it 'ull end in a wake, yet. Och! run for your life, your honour, will you?"

"Now take your breath, and then tell me quietly what is the matter, Pat," replied Ernest.

"Tell you quietly, do you say? Arrah, then, I'm in a pretty state to be quiet, aint I, and with them roarin' villins comin' on, too. And here they are upon us, faix! and now we are as good as kilt entirely."

There was indeed a rush of feet in the passage, and, before Ernest could interpose, half a dozen men had entered, their heads streaming with blood; and shut and secured the door. A glance showed that they were Irish, and a fearful yell without, bursting at once from hundreds of voices, indicated the close proximity of their enemies. The Irish, however, had the advantage of great experience in such affrays, and in a moment they so barricaded the door and lower window of the hovel, with desks, chairs, and stools, that the assailants, with all their combined strength, were unable to force an entrance.

Ernest now learnt from Riley the origin of the disturbance, from which it appeared, that the English had come to the resolution of driving the Irish off the line, at

the same time subjecting them, in revenge for past affronts, to the grossest ill-usage, and denouncing summary vengeance against all who had supported them. In this category Ernest was included, and in fact many of the assailants were calling upon him by name, to stand forth and show himself, that they might tear his heart out—a shocking threat, coming from such men, who were not only brutal enough to tear out his heart, but almost savage enough to eat it.

The first attack was followed up by a volley of brick-bats, which the door and window-shutters, in themselves very crazy defences, would have been unable to resist, if they had not been so effectually barricaded.

“We can’t stand this long,” said Ernest, to Wormwood. “What is to be done?”

“I—I don’t know,” answered Wormwood, who was suffering from a tremor in his fangs. “I—I wish I could get out, and—and run.”

“But you can’t. You’d be caught, and most likely be severely handled. But we must get some one out, and send for assistance, or we shall be murdered.”

“You’re not—not goin’ yourself,” stammered Wormwood, who, ever suspecting treachery, thought Ernest wished to secure his own retreat, and leave him in the lurch. “I—I won’t—won’t hear of it, Mis—Mister Glynn.”

“Don’t be alarmed,” returned Ernest. “I’ve no intention of running away, even if it were possible, which it does not appear to be. The thing is, can we apprise our friends of our situation? I think we might.”—He turned to Riley, and asked if he could swim.

“Like a duck, yer honour, no less,” returned Riley.

“Then you must get out at the back of the house, and drop into the canal,” rejoined Ernest—“when you can

make over the brickfield to Drayland, and knock up Mr. Shorter. Let him know the extremity we are in, and he'll do something to assist us."

"Troth, I wisht he was here now, yer honour," returned Riley, as another furious assault was made on the door, "but it's myself that'll give him no paice till he's on the road."

There was no door at the back of the hovel, which, as already observed, stood on the brink of the canal; but about midway between the ground and roof, there was a small fan-light, for the purpose of lighting the stairs; and it was through this outlet that Riley was to make his egress. The poor fellow devoted himself to the enterprise with a resolution approaching the heroic, and submitted in silence to the operation of being worked through the small aperture, though it occasioned him no little suffering. But a party were watching the back of the house, from the bank higher up, and his descent from the casement, after clinging for a moment to the sill, was a signal for a shower of brickbats, one of which struck him a violent blow as he fell with a splash in the water. A fearful yell announced his flight to the mob in front, who, supposing that all the inmates were attempting to escape, redoubled their efforts to gain an entrance, while two or three of the rearward party threw off their smocks, and followed Riley into the water. The Irishman scarcely ventured to appear on the surface, but struck out below, and a few efforts brought him to his feet, when he scrambled up the bank, and darted away. He had not gone many steps, however, when he tumbled headlong into a stagnant pool, and before he could extricate himself his pursuers had gained the bank, and were close upon him. A loud halloo betrayed their presence, and consciousness of his proximity; but Riley doubled round a brick-kiln,

and got a start. He then made a dash for the road, hotly pursued by the navvies.

While this was proceeding outside, Ernest, foreseeing that the door must soon be forced, was strengthening his defences within, by erecting a second barricade at the foot of the stairs. Having previously used all the furniture, he would now have been at a loss for material, but his Irish garrison, with the help of their pickaxes, tore up the flooring of the upper room, and pulled out the grates, forming with these accessories an impassable barrier. They then raised the bricks which composed the floor of the passage, heaping them up behind the barricade, to serve as missiles, and finally, under Ernest's direction, took up their position on the stairs, and awaited the enemy.

The door withstood its assailants longer than they expected, but, at last, it broke in with a crash, throwing down the rampart of chairs and stools, which fell in fragments in the passage. A swarm of navvies poured in, brandishing pickaxes and shovels, and made a rush at the inner barricade ; but were received, as they advanced, with such a shower of bricks, that they fell back over each other, blocking up the way, and causing a frightful scene of confusion—heightened, if possible, by the darkness, Ernest having extinguished the light. Still the mob behind, more and more infuriated, pushed on, trampling over their own accomplices, and uttering the most appalling yells, mingled with threats too horrible to be repeated. Missiles could no longer keep them back, and a struggle commenced over the barricade, in which Ernest, now fighting for his life, took a foremost part. A gigantic navvie at length seized him by the throat, and was dragging him over the barricade, when a blow from an Irishman's shovel drove him back, and set Ernest free.

But in the encounter, one of the planks broke down, greatly weakening the defence, and the assailants, pushing forward in a body, gained a footing on the stairs. All now seemed lost, but at this critical moment there was a loud cry of "War-ork," used on the line to denote the approach of a constable, and presently it arose from without as from one voice. Cheered by the hope of succour, the defendants made a desperate effort to maintain their ground, and as the cry of "War-ork" again rose, the assailants fell back, rushing from the house as other shouts were heard, followed by the trampling of horse. In fact, as they poured forth, a troop of cavalry galloped up to the hovel, scattering the mob in all directions.

Riley, it turned out, had made his way to Mr. Shorter's ; but the riot had already spread along the line, and knowing that no ordinary force could repress it, the overseer had gone off at once to —, and brought down the military, whose timely appearance secured the safety of Ernest and his companions. For some moments they were in great alarm about Wormwood, who had mysteriously disappeared ; but, at last he was found in the upper room, concealed in a cupboard, and half dead with fear.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REWARD OF MERIT.

THE ferment caused by the riot, extending for some distance along the line, did not subside for several days. Many on both sides were severely injured, and not a few were apprehended by the police, and afterwards, as the

most active of the rioters, brought to trial at the assizes. Ernest, having fought in the dark, was unable to identify any of the parties, but the case was made out against several, and they were sentenced to transportation, while others, guilty in a less degree, were adjudged various terms of imprisonment.

On the morning following the riot, Parkyns and Blouser, hearing what had occurred, paid an early visit to the office, impatient to learn the real facts ; and found Ernest already at work.

"Here's a game !" cried Blouser, as he came upon the wreck in the passage.

"Faix, it's true for you, yer honour," observed Pat Riley, who had just appeared with his can. "It bate Donnybrook holler, you may take yer oath."

"Where did you make your great stand ?" asked Parkyns of Ernest.

"Just here," replied Ernest, "at the foot of the stairs."

"Sitch a gettin' up stairs I never did see," remarked Blouser.

"By dad, yer honour's a good judge," remarked Riley.—"It was a beautiful skrimmage, no doubt ; and you'd give the two eyes of your head to see sitch another !"

"Over here," said Blouser, pointing significantly over his left shoulder.

"It was a good position, and well chosen," remarked Parkyns, with the air of a general. "A barricade here, and the rise of the stairs behind, with the narrow passage in front, gave you a great advantage, and you might hold out a long time. How many of you were there ?"

"Half a dozen in all," answered Ernest.

"Of those half-dozen I ask but three, to make a new Thermopylæ," said Parkyns.

"Good!" cried Blouser. "Bravo Rouse!"

"I've no doubt Parkyns would have distinguished himself," said Ernest; "but still I can't help thinking we did pretty well, and I'm quite satisfied to have got off as we did. But what's become of Wormwood?"

"Hooked it," replied Blouser.

"Not he," said Parkyns. "I called round at his place, and found he'd set off at daylight for Markford, no doubt to report his exploits to the Yellow-hammer, and you'll find, when the cat comes out, that it was Wormwood who did everything, and that our worthy friend Glynn was a mere cipher in the affair."

"And so it proved; for, about half an hour afterwards, Mr. Hammer, thus accurately informed, appeared on the line, walking arm-in-arm with Wormwood, in the most friendly and confidential manner—a condescension which seemed almost too much for his *protégé*, who, in the words of Mr. Blouser, looked "staggered" on the occasion. They were attended by two of the mounted patrol, as a guard of honour, neither gentleman being yet thoroughly satisfied that all was safe.

Mr. Hammer scowled at Ernest as he entered the office.

"A good night's work you have made, sir, meddling with the men," he said. "What business have you with their quarrels?"

"I really don't understand you, sir," replied Ernest, indignant at this affront. "Surely Mr. Wormwood, if he has told you anything of what has occurred, must have let you know that we acted here last night in self-defence, and had nothing whatever to do with the quarrels of the men."

"I can answer for myself, that I had not, most certainly," said Wormwood, with a glare at his patron.

"Don't drag in Mr. Wormwood, I beg, sir," cried Mr. Hammer. "For his part in this occurrence, both the Company and Mr. Colville are greatly indebted to him, and, in their name, I take this opportunity to tender him publicly their thanks. I am not imputing blame to him, but to you. I am told you have been interfering in the disputes of the work-people, and from this all the disturbance has originated."

"Then, I can only say, sir, your informant has wilfully misled you," replied Ernest.

"What do you say?"

"What I am prepared to prove. I have never interfered with the work-people in any way, except when appealed to, and then only so far as was necessary to prevent the stoppage of the works."

"That's enough, sir. I don't want to hear any more."

"Pardon me, Mr. Hammer. You have brought a charge against me—a charge of the most serious description, and I must be heard in refutation of it. If not, I shall appeal to Mr. Colville."

"Enough, I tell you," said Mr. Hammer, turning purple with rage.

"Are you satisfied of my innocence, sir?" pursued Ernest, "because here is Mr. Shorter"—the overseer entered at this instant—"who knows all the circumstances, and you must permit me to request an investigation. You are acquainted with the whole history of this disturbance among the workmen, Mr. Shorter?"

"Yes."

"What has been my conduct in the matter?"

"Extremely proper."

"Have I ever shown a disposition to interfere unnecessarily?"

"Quite the reverse. You have abstained from interfering as long as possible."

"Have I ever done anything to warrant an imputation of favouritism or partiality?"

"On the contrary, your conduct has always been characterised by forbearance, moderation, and a spirit of justice."

"For he's a jolly good fellow," broke out Blouser. "*Hem!*—beg pardon."—And he blew his nose violently, in the utmost confusion.

"I hope, sir, you are now convinced I have been misrepresented to you," said Ernest to Mr. Hammer.

"Very well, sir—very well," returned Mr. Hammer. "Let it be a warning to you not to interfere again—that's all."—And before Ernest could reply, he marched out of the office, followed by Wormwood.

"This is too bad," exclaimed Ernest. "He pretends to give me a reprimand, though I have disproved the charge. But I will ask him to produce my accuser."—And he made a movement towards the door.

"Stop where you are," said Parkyns, arresting him. "You've said quite enough to vindicate your character as a gentleman, and as a gentleman I applaud you for it. But a word more would do harm."

"Mild," observed Blouser, "mild's the word. Let off the steam, my boy."

But the impetuous young man, irritated at treatment so undeserved, and smarting under Mr. Hammer's reproof, broke from them, and rushed out.

Mr. Hammer had just got into his gig, which, on

alighting to walk up the line, he had directed to be brought round to the office by the road, and Ernest only encountered Wormwood.

"I am indebted to you, I presume, for this unprovoked attack," he said, with a look of scorn. "If you have anything to allege against me, state it openly and fairly, and I will meet it."

"What can have put this into your head?" replied Wormwood. "I can have nothing to say of you, Mr. Glynn, but what is to your advantage."

"You know you have misrepresented me to Mr. Hammer, and that I have in consequence been censured, when my conduct deserved approbation."

"You accuse me of this! Where is your proof?"

"Proof!"

"Yes," said Wormwood, his eyes protruding. "I ask—I demand your proof. On what evidence do you charge me with so base an action?"

Ernest was confounded by the question. He had, indeed, acted only on suspicion—a suspicion dictated equally by an instinct in his own breast (too often a blind guide), and by several concurring circumstances; but a moment's reflection showed him that, however he might suspect, he had no right to condemn on such slender and inconclusive grounds.

"I have always acted towards you as a friend," resumed Wormwood. "With me, friendship is a sacred sentiment, and the ruling principle of my life. But there are some people—people whom I have shrined in my heart, and defended behind their backs, who are incapable of friendship, and always suspecting and doubting. I ought to know there is no such thing as friendship in the world—it's too sacred: it's always on one side. Gisippus sacrificed himself to his friend: and Cæsar thought he had a friend in

Brutus, but Brutus stabbed him. That was the unkindest cut of all."

"If you were my friend," said Ernest, "why didn't you attest what I said when I appealed to you?"

"So I did."

"I understood you to speak only for yourself."

"Then it was a mistake, for I meant to speak clearly and decisively."

"I'm glad to hear you say so. I've been too hasty, perhaps, in accusing you, and am sorry for it. I hope we shall really be friends in future."

They shook hands, Wormwood declaring he had no object in life but friendship, and that, regarded as a moral influence, friendship was the most pure and noble that could animate the bosom of man.

"I drink to that sentiment," cried Parkyns, appearing at the office-door, "Riley, the mixture! Mr. Wormwood's sentiment, Blouser!—friendship."—Parkyns had become very satirical on the subject of Wormwood's attachment,—“not forgetting absent friends, Mr. Hammer to wit."

"Hammer and tongs," said Blouser. "Go ahead!"

Peace being established, matters proceeded in their usual course. The work of laying the rails progressed rapidly, and, as it advanced, was regarded with the greatest interest in the scientific world. Soon a run of about three miles was complete, and presented, in its structure and general features, an appearance so different from other railways, that it might well excite curiosity and attract universal attention.

On this tract it was determined to experimentalize, and accordingly an engine was brought down from London by the road, with half a dozen carriages, for the purpose of running a train on the new-fashioned rails.

And here it may be necessary to explain the principle on which the rails were put down, which, fortunately for the reader, can be done in a few words. On most lines, the rails are laid at intervals of a few feet, on transverse sleepers, to which they are secured by iron grooves, called chairs, causing at times a jolting, and often a vibratory motion, very far from agreeable. To get rid of such a drawback, and secure a perfectly easy motion, the rails on the Hirlemdown line were laid without chairs, on longitudinal sleepers, running the whole length of the rail, and supported, at short distances, by cross beams, fastened on piles. To render this massive framework still more stable, as well as to insure steadiness under the pressure of a train, the sleepers were packed, as it was called, with sifted gravel—that is, every stone was thrown aside, and the sand of the gravel beaten underneath the sleeper in a mass, affording, it was supposed, a uniformly level base, which would resist any amount of pressure, and consequently prevent the least vibration.

Great was the excitement when the engine, so long expected, made its appearance at Drayland, mounted on a colossal truck, drawn by a whole stud of horses. Chains of iron and massive wedges, strengthened by bolts, were necessary to secure its huge frame to the vehicle, as if it were a monster instinct with life, ready to bear down at once on everything in the road. And it required but a draught of water in its tubes, inflating its iron lungs with a little vapour, to snap its chains as Samson did the threads of flax—leap from its lofty car, and dart on its course uncontrolled, though a stone wall stood in the way.

The whole country turned out, as one man, to view the first trip on the line. Scientific men from every part of the kingdom, including the most eminent engineers of the

day, came down in troops, and filled all the carriages. The controversy which had been raging from the first projection of the line was now about to be decided, and a great scientific principle negatived or affirmed. Isaac Colville, after seeing that everything was in order, himself mounted the engine—it might be with a shade of anxiety perceptible in his face, but still with the decision of a hero, and all the confidence of genius. The hour was at hand when his days of ceaseless toil, his sleepless nights, his untiring energy, vigilance, and exertion, would be rewarded, and the object of his ambition achieved. After reviling him in every possible way, so bitterly and so long, his enemies had come to be present at his defeat, and would have to bear witness to his triumph. Yet, in truth, he did not think of their discomfiture, but of his own success.

With a shriek of joy the engine felt the vivifying steam circulating in its veins. It drew along the stately train, peopled with human beings, as if it were a feather, gliding over the rails with the swiftness of thought. Nothing could be easier than the motion—nothing more smooth, steady, or agreeable. Mr. Colville's detractors began to look serious; his friends to exult. In a moment there was but one opinion as to the result of the experiment: its success was complete.

But the return trip, though the line of rails was the same, excited a misgiving: once or twice there had been a sensible vibration. The sceptics took heart again, and suggested another trial. This, to their surprise, no less than Mr. Colville's, was more decisive, showing a marked unsteadiness in the motion. There was a general exclamation of wonder, and, as the train drew up, every one sprang from the carriages to see how such a change could have arisen. The cause was but too clear: the weight of

the train, as it flew over the rails, had driven out the packing, and the sleepers being unsupported, except at the cross beams, undulated under pressure, and imparted a vibratory motion to the train.

But the Colvillites contended that this was one of those little incidents which always occur at first experiments, and which, therefore, could not be regarded as a result. The defect would be remedied by a little fresh packing, and, accordingly, fresh packing was immediately resorted to. Further experiments, however, produced the same effect, and for several days they were renewed with consequences precisely similar, till, at length, the conviction began to spread, among the chiefs of both parties, that Isaac Colville's great scheme was a FAILURE.

An ardent admirer of Mr. Colville, Ernest, nevertheless, early perceived, from a careful examination of the sleepers, that it was not the packing, but the *quality* of the packing that led to this result. He observed that the fine gravel, though beaten in a mass beneath the sleeper, yet possessing in itself no binding property, pulverized under pressure, and flew out like dust. It then became clear to him that what the packing required was the power of cohesion, and as this could not be imparted where there was no natural capability, he came to the conclusion that some new material, which was not open to such an objection, must be used, and the sifted gravel discarded. What if he tried the gravel UNSIFTED! No sooner did the idea occur to him, than he proceeded, with characteristic promptitude, to put it in execution, and, with his own hands, packed the coarse gravel under two sleepers, awaiting the passage of the train to test its powers of resistance.

How high his heart beat when—stooping down as the train passed, to watch, with eager eyes, the effect of the enormous pressure—he saw the two sleepers remain im-

movable ! Again and again the train passed and repassed, in every other spot driving out the packing like chaff ; but here, for the few paces resting on the new material, the rails stood firm as a rock—all the more firm, indeed, the more they were pressed.

A strange revulsion of feeling came over Ernest, and he turned from the spot, at the very moment that his hopes were realized, with a sickening sensation of diffidence. He had made an important discovery, but to what purpose ? How could he turn it to account ? how communicate it to Mr. Colville ? The world would scoff, indeed, at such a tyro as he was, with his experience of twelve months, presuming to offer a suggestion to the great engineer. No ; better bury his discovery in oblivion than expose himself, by such a step, at once to derision and disgrace.

He thought over the subject all night, and all the next day ; but at length ambition triumphed over discretion, and he determined to write to Mr. Colville, informing him of the experiment he had made, and its result.

It will readily be understood, by those who have acquired any perception of his character, how carefully every word of his letter was weighed and considered, and how sensible its writer was of the difficulty of alluding to Mr. Colville's failure, and his own success. With all his pains, he would, perhaps, a year later, when his pen had acquired greater felicity of expression, have written an epistle much less open to misconstruction, and more to the point. But probably he would not then have written it at all.

Not till after long hesitation was the momentous composition finally consigned to the Post-office—that bourne whence no letter returns. And now that the Rubicon was passed, Ernest's misgivings became intole-

nable. He flew to the Post-office to withdraw the letter, but it was too late : Mercury had gone.

The experiments on the line had been suspended for a day or two, and next morning, Ernest was walking down the works, in company with Parkyns, longing to tell him what he had done, but not knowing how to open the subject, when the latter, who had been carefully examining the road, suddenly stopped at the spot where Ernest had been operating.

"Hilloa, how's this?" he said. "Look here!"

"Well?" said Ernest.

"Well, don't you see?" resumed Parkyns. "The packing here hasn't given way."—He jumped up and down on the two sleepers—first on one, and then on the other. "By Jove, they're as firm as the ground itself. I can't make it out."

"Shall I tell you how it is?" said Ernest.

"Why, you haven't been up to anything yourself, have you?"

"Yes. As an experiment, I packed these two sleepers with unsifted gravel, and you see how they've stood."

Parkyns turned very red at this announcement—so difficult is it, even when we are not destitute of good-nature, to hear without vexation of the success of another.

"You've hit the nail on the head there, and no mistake," he said. "It's very odd, I've thought of the same thing myself, several times, and intended to try it in a day or two."—Parkyns always had a foreshadowing of every one's discoveries, but invariably after the event—"What are you going to do about it?"

"I've written to Mr. Colville, mentioning what led me to the discovery, and how 'it has answered.'"

"The deuce you have! 'Pon my word, Glynn, the size of your cheek is alarming."

"You think I've acted wrong?"

"I don't say wrong, but foolishly—desperately. Don't you know that I. C. thinks his own conceptions immaculate? Don't you see he never gives in—that though every one else is convinced, he goes on, day after day, testing and experimenting, when his best friends acknowledge it's all up? And you've had the audacity to tell him so!"

"You take a wrong view of his character. All this is only the decision and perseverance of genius, which will not tamely be conquered. But I shall be sorry if he misconstrues my motives."

"Misconstrues! I tell you I see 'sack' written on your face as plain as if the word was already spoken."

"You had much the same apprehensions about the Brawl viaduct."

"Ah! there the case was different. A casualty occurred, and you acted with promptitude and decision, and acted right. It was impossible not to approve of what you had done. But even in that case, what good did you ever get by it?"

"None, I confess."

"And depend upon it, you'll get still less by this move."

Such remarks were not calculated to raise Ernest's spirits, and, as Parkyns said no more, they walked on to the office in silence. A letter was lying there for Ernest, in the handwriting of Mr. Hammer, and, conjecturing its purport, he tore it open, and read as follows:—

"Sir,

"I am requested by Mr. Colville to inform you that he has no further occasion for your services.

"Your obedient servant,

"I. I. HAMMER."

"Well, what news?" asked Parkyns.

Ernest handed him the letter.

"I told you so," said Parkyns, running his eye over the contents. "My dear fellow, NEVER TEACH YOUR GRANDMOTHER!"

CHAPTER XVII.

A WEAK INVENTION OF THE ENEMY.

It is time that we should return to Glynellan, to glance for a moment at the events which followed Ernest's departure, more than twelve months previous to those detailed in our last chapter.

With all his caution, he had not quitted his uncle's house unobserved. There was one under the same roof who, though he could not appreciate, well understood his character, and, in the present conjuncture, watched him with sleepless vigilance. Wordley Glynn felt that the moment was as big with peril to himself as to his cousin. If it were once seen that the toils spread around Ernest had been laid by his hand—that the bad impression produced on Mr. Glynn's mind had emanated from him, then it would be himself, not Ernest, who would be disgraced, and all his plottings would only have brought about his own downfall. What he most dreaded, therefore, was investigation; and it might happen that Mr. Glynn would cool by the morning, and allow Ernest an opportunity of establishing his innocence. Wordley's joy,

then, may be imagined, when, himself unseen, he was a spectator of his stealthy departure, which not only averted such a contingency, but would render Mr. Glynn's estrangement from him more decided.

The point now was to give this effect permanence—to prevent any compunctious revival of affection, when anger and resentment had subsided. In such a revulsion of feeling all his work might be undone, and, as the prime mover of Ernest's dismissal, he would become an object of aversion to Mr. Glynn, who, in his spleen, might proceed to the harshest measures against him. But, to secure impunity, what more easy, while the affair was yet fresh, than to blacken Ernest's character still further and so render his uncle inexorable? It was a sure way of effecting his ends, and he resolved to put it in practice.

Other schemes, connected indirectly with the same object, had been maturing in his mind, and now seemed easy of accomplishment. Men who succeed by crooked means, haunted by the remembrance of their own perfidy, are always apprehending a similar policy in others, and, like Cromwell, see an assassin in every shadow. Wordley Glynn was not content with having brought about the ruin of his cousin: he resolved to banish also Farmer Clinton and Jessie, since the latter, under the infatuation of her romantic attachment, might remain in communication with Ernest, and keep him informed of all that occurred at Glynellan. She might even be employed, at some future time, to convey messages from him to Mr. Glynn, and thus pave the way for a reconciliation. In any case, it was desirable, after the manner in which she had been implicated, to remove both her and her father from the neighbourhood, and circumstances were highly favourable to this design, as Clinton's lease had just ex-

pired, and he could now exert his influence to prevent its being renewed.

There was indeed one bar to the eviction of the Clintons, which might have had some weight with a less daring schemer ; and that, as may be imagined, was the interest felt for them by Frost. Nor did this fail to receive consideration from Wordley, but, instead of shaking, it only confirmed his intentions, as he saw more danger in caressing the bailiff than in setting him at defiance. Frost knew that he had been made use of, and, in the overbearing insolence of his nature, already began to assume an air of independence, forgetting that, while he had eagerly accepted his services, Wordley had never, by any overt act, placed himself in his power. He was now to share the fate usually awarded to those who barter their honesty for a mess of pottage, and abjectly lend themselves to the base ends of others : the first act of a murderer, when he has consummated his crime, is to throw away his knife.

On the eventful morning of Ernest's departure, Mr. Glynn did not appear in his sitting-room till much later than usual, and even then, still showed, in his flushed cheek and angry eye, unequivocal traces of the agitation and excitement of the preceding day.

"I don't know who it is comes into my room at night," he said, snappishly, as Wordley presented himself, "or what business they have there, but I wish they'd keep out. This morning my things are all scattered over the room, and I can't find my purse."

"This is very strange," remarked Wordley. "My purse, too, is missing. I thought I might have mislaid it, but if you have had a similar loss, some of the servants must be dishonest. Have you questioned your valet, sir? I really think you ought to inquire into it."

"And, of course, I shall. It is my duty, as a magistrate, to do so. I don't want to be instructed by you."

"Certainly not, I merely ventured to suggest—"

"You're too ready with your suggestions. But I have something else to think of this morning. Send some one for my other dutiful nephew, will you?"

"I am sorry to say Ernest has left the house, sir."

"Left the house!" said Mr. Glynn, turning sharply round, and fixing a searching look on the other's face. "What do you mean?"

"He appears to have gone, sir. He was seen this morning, soon after daybreak, about five miles off, by one of the gamekeepers, and had a carpet-bag slung over his shoulders—from which I conclude he is not coming back."

"Let him go!—let him go!" said Mr. Glynn, scoffingly. But he turned uneasily in his chair, and was silent a moment.—"Has he left no letter, or anything, to show where he's gone to?—not that I want to know."

"I am not aware that he has, but, now you mention it, I should think it is not unlikely. Perhaps I had better inquire."

Mr. Glynn, though he gave no assent, did not object to this proposal, and Wordley rang the bell, directing the attendant to summon Ernest's servant. The latter, a sharp Welsh boy, promptly appeared, but he could give no information respecting his master, nor had he seen anything lying about in his room, except an empty purse, which he produced, having laid it aside to give Ernest as soon as he should see him.

"And you know nothing further?" said Wordley.

"No, sir."

"That will do, then," cried Mr. Glynn, abruptly. "You may go."

As he left the room, Mr. Glynn, who had seemed impatient for his departure, caught up the purse from the table, and examined it minutely. He then thrust it into the middle of the fire, beating the coal down on it with the poker. It was his own purse, which had been abstracted on the previous night from his room.

Wordley looked on with a half-smile, of which, however, not a trace appeared, when his uncle, turning round, evinced the most painful agitation, in which it was difficult to say whether sorrow or anger had the predominant place.

"I don't know how to account for it," observed Wordley, as if lost in thought, "but that purse is certainly yours, sir. How came it in Ernest's room?—on the floor, too, dropped unconsciously! But, my dearest uncle, how ill you look! You are overwhelmed by this dreadful discovery. But do not, I entreat, look at it in its worst aspect. Suspicious as everything seems, my cousin may be innocent of this great offence."

"Enough," said Mr. Glynn, sternly. "I will only make one remark—never mention his name in my presence again."

"You shall be obeyed, dear uncle; and I wish everything that might remind you of these unhappy events could be removed. It will, for instance, be very disagreeable to you, I'm sure, ever to be brought in contact with these Clintons, with whom my cousin formed such a disgraceful connexion. We had already partly determined on breaking up the Blynt farm, the lease of which has just run out; and as this man's conduct appears to me to have been bad, and his daughter's worse, I would recommend you to send them off."

"Manage it as you like," said Mr. Glynn, in a subdued, abstracted tone, the shock he had sustained leaving him

completely prostrate, while his face, at first turning pale, again grew flushed, as if the slur on the honourable name of his race had dyed it with shame. Wordley had not anticipated such success, and he immediately made it subservient to his designs, acquiring in a few minutes a greater ascendancy over his uncle than he had ever attained before. So complete was his triumph, that Mr. Glynn, when he left the room, gave orders that all business was to be referred to Mr. Wordley, to the utter discomfiture of Frost, who, waiting at the door for an audience, overheard these directions, and was refused admission.

He looked up familiarly at Wordley as he passed out ; but the young Squire, who was never to be taken at a disadvantage, kept his eyes on the floor, seeming quite unconscious of his presence. Frost, however, followed him to his room.

"Well, Mr. Frost, what is it?" said Wordley, a little stiffly, as he threw himself into a chair.

"Why, I've come about that lease," replied the bailiff, who, though rather abashed, endeavoured to look confident. "I was going to speak to the governor about it myself."

"The governor!" said Wordley. "Who is he?"

"Well, I only knows of one—and that's Mr. Glynn," returned the bailiff, doggedly.

"Really?"

"Yes; and I thought you'd have managed, Squire, after my speakin' to you, to have got him round to renew the lease. It wasn't much to expect, and I've always heard one good turn deserves another."

"And you have no doubt been correctly informed, my good friend; but though all this may strike you as very clear and precise, you must permit me to observe that

it sounds very mysterious to me. I can't imagine what you're talking about."

"I'm talking about the lease for John Clinton. I've spoke to you about it two or three times, and you've always put me off: so I went to the fountain-head."

"And you seem not to have fared any better. But as you want an answer, I will give you one at once. Mr. Glynn has not only no intention of renewing the lease, but he has directed the usual notice to be sent to Clinton, requiring him to leave the farm in three weeks from this day."

"And you think to get rid of me so, do you?"

"My good friend," said Wordley, with his most benignant look, expressive alike of forbearance and compassion, "your language is perfectly unintelligible. I am sorry to see you have been drinking."

"Have I, though?" returned Frost, turning purple with rage: "drinkin'? Then, I suppose you don't want me to look after Master Ernest this morning, and make up a parcel of lies about him for your uncle—do you?"

Wordley's reply was a surprised smile, beaming however, with his usual benevolence.

"You always grin on the same side of your mouth," pursued Frost; "you wouldn't like to try the other, would you—for a change? I've served your turn, and, now you've climbed up the tree, you want to kick away the ladder. But my word's snacks, and snacks I'll have, or I'll make a clean breast of it to Mr. Glynn."

"And you say this to me?" said Wordley, still preserving a dignified calm. "Well, we shall see."

He got up, and walked out of the room, leaving Frost uncertain whether he would return. A moment's reflection suggested to the worthy bailiff that he had probably

been rather precipitate, and gone too far, but before he could resolve on any conciliatory course, Wordley reappeared, accompanied, to Frost's great astonishment, by Mr. Glynn.

"Now, sir, here is Mr. Glynn," said the imperturbable Wordley. "What have you to tell him about me?"

"About you, Mr. Wordley?" faltered the panic-stricken bully.

"Yes, about me, my good sir. You threatened to complain of me to my uncle; and now I must insist on your speaking out, and stating your grievance in my presence."

Thus adjured, the bailiff turned an abject look on Mr. Glynn, but the old man was perfectly insensible to the appeal, contemplating both Frost and his nephew with the same indifference.

"I ask you pardon, Mr. Wordley," said Frost, in despair. "I—"

"Don't think any more about it," said Wordley, with the magnanimity of an Alexander. "I freely forgive you, and was sure, if you had reflected a moment, you would never have used such language."

"I'd sooner bite my tongue out, sir, than say a word against you," rejoined the grateful bailiff, "and I don't know who could."

"Thank you, Mr. Frost—thank you, very much. Such an observation must, under the circumstances, be extremely satisfactory to my uncle, particularly as he has determined on discharging you. That, I think, sir, is your determination?"

"Yes, yes, send him away," said Mr Glynn, fretfully.

"Mr. Glynn has made out a cheque for your wages to the end of the month," pursued Wordley, presenting a

draft, "which I have much pleasure in handing to you, and I shall be glad to hear of your well-doing. Now, my dear uncle."

And, before Frost could recover from this surprise, he led the passive Squire out of the room.

"Dead sold!" exclaimed the bailiff, after remaining for a moment rooted to the spot: "as if I could play stakes with him! But my turn 'll come some day—I won't forget him!"

And with a dark scowl on his face, now livid with evil passions, he swaggered out.

A few yards from the house, he met Clinton, who was pacing to and fro, awaiting his appearance.

"It's all up," he said. "They won't give you the lease, and I can't make 'em. They're determined to have you off."

"Cairnt be helped," replied Clinton, with his usual stolid composure.

"You take it very quiet," rejoined the bailiff, mockingly. "Being turned out of house and home is no odds to you. You've got plenty to live on, you have!"

"No, I airnt," said Clinton. "But gat these 'un."—And he raised his brawny hands.

"Give us hold on 'em," cried Frost, with affected fervour, as he gave the farmer a terrible gripe. "As they won't have you, they shan't have me, and so I have told 'em. I'll stand by you. I've got money, too, and as long as I have a shilling left, you shall have sixpence on it."

"Thank'ee, friend. It's a time of mournin' and tribulation, but airnt goin' to give in, nayther. Elder Sparrow he say we'rn comin' an times and seasons, and all ourn lease be up speedy. Don't know how't be! but Bethel's the word: Amen!"

"We can take a farm together," said Frost. "I tell

you I've got money, and if your girl will only be agreeable, you'll never have occasion to work. You give me Jess for a wife, and I don't want any money from you."

"You'n have my consent, if's gat she's," replied Clinton, quite indifferent. "Cairnt say further."

"Yes, you can—you can compel her," said Frost doggedly, "and you must."

"May'n fetch her to stream, but cairnt make her drink," rejoined the imperturbable farmer: "nor shairnt, nayther."

And all Frost's subtlety, using now protestations, now promises, failed to shake his resolution; for in the farmer's sluggish heart, there was but one thing that could contend with love for his child, and that was fanaticism.

Quickened by this affection, even he had observed an alteration in Jessie, which, in the sympathy it excited, imparted a degree of sensibility to himself. Thus he avoided making any allusion to Ernest in her presence; and scrupulously concealed from her, for the same reason, how seriously he had compromised him with his uncle. But it required no new incitements to keep the living image of Ernest uppermost in her mind. And perhaps she cherished it the more, because she felt, since their meeting of the previous day, that they had probably parted for ever, and that her feeble glimmer of happiness was at an end. Yet the intelligence that Ernest had clandestinely left the Keep, which spread like wild-fire over the neighbourhood, and reached her ears only too soon, caused her a fresh pang, as if it was not till then that the utter hopelessness of her attachment became fully apparent. The imaginary sorrows of the past disappeared before this widowhood of her heart, although from awakening feelings hitherto inert and dormant, the real affliction was a relief, compared with the vacuity and

stagnation of her former existence. So forcible, indeed, was the contrast, that the memory of a few bright hours almost compensated for the misery of a desolate future.

It was not strange that, dwelling so fondly on these reminiscences, she should continually recall what Ernest had said, particularly those remarks which most evinced the elevation of his mind, directing her to look for consolation and support to the beneficent Disposer of all things. She treasured them, alas ! not for their purport, but because they were his sentiments, and testified to his worth. But who can tell where the seed of their thoughts may fall—on good soil or stony ground ; or what effect they may ultimately produce ? Divine intelligence may speak with a child's voice, and words uttered unthinkingly, without a purpose, sometimes take root in another bosom, and, in due time, bring forth fruit a hundred-fold.

Jessie was engaged in her usual duties when her father and Frost presented themselves.

"Squire wunt gie no fresh lease, Jess," said Clinton, while his companion, with a familiar greeting, flung himself into a seat ; "so we'n han to pack."

"I was afraid it would be so," replied Jessie, though her changing colour showed she was hardly prepared for the worst. "But don't grieve about it, father. You've let it harass you too long ; and now it's off your mind, you'll be able to look after something else."

"See to 't 'cording," answered Clinton ; "but Muster Frost he's han a word wi' you now, so leave the two an ye 'lane a bit."

"You needn't do that," said Jessie, her face flushing, though she spoke in a subdued tone. "I'd rather he said what he has to say while you're present."

"That aint the proper way to go courtin', my lass,"

said Frost. "But, come, I want to make things agreeable and let you do as you like ; so you sit down, old man ! And now to the point."

He looked over to Jessie, as if for some encouragement, but she sat quite still, without raising her eyes.

"Father and I have been talking about you," he said, at length, recovering his effrontery, "and have come to a sort of understandin', by reason that it only wants you to agree, and it's all settled. Stop a minute, till I tell you the whole concern. You were just speakin' about what father 'ud do, as he's lost his lease ; and now I'll tell you. First, he's going to join partners with me—aint you, old man ? "

"Go an," said Clinton, nodding his head.

"Our agreement's this, Jessie," pursued Frost—"that you and me make a match of it, and father come and live with us ; and, hang me, if we don't make him comfortable !—only you say the word : will you have me, or no ? "

"No," replied Jessie. "What you propose is impossible."

"Impossible ! Why ? What's the objections ?"

"It would be useless to name any. Spare yourself and me the pain, and take my refusal for an answer."

"No, I won't," returned Frost, desperately. "No ! That 'ud be letting you off rather too easy. If you've got anything to say against my character—" and he assumed an air of indignant probity—"say it, now I'm here to meet it, and I'll clear myself of it, I know."

"I've nothing to say against you."

"Then, why won't you marry me ?"

"I've told you already—I can't."

"Can't means won't," cried Frost, savagely. "Better say at once you won't."

The word rose to Jessie's lips, as the angry look to her brow ; but something within, the newly awakened instincts of human sympathy, dictated a gentler answer.

"I want to tell you kindly, and without offence," she said ; "but I am not the less determined. My resolution is taken, and I will abide by it."

"You hear her !" said Frost to her father, "She refuses a home for you and herself, though you've got to turn out on nothing. And you let her ride over you in this way, and make a foot-ball of you !"

"Don't know," said Clinton, rubbing his forehead, "Mun choose for hersel, and never mind I."

"You're a fool !" was bursting from the bailiff's lips, but he restrained himself, and turned again to Jessie.

"Come, lass, think it over," he said, more temperately. "Don't throw away a good chance, and a man who'll make you a good partner. Here's old father wants us to make all square, though he keeps mum ; and I won't say, on considerin', but what he's in the right on it. Come, you've had your way, and now give in ; there's no use standing out any more."

"Why do you torment me in this way ?" returned Jessie. "If you have any feeling for me—or even for yourself, you'll desist ; for what I have said I will adhere to."

"I see how it is !" exclaimed Frost, exasperated. "You've set your mind on young Glynn, though he's slighted you, and looked down upon you. They say that's the way to make a woman fond of you, but I do wonder at a girl of spirit like you—a girl who might have her pick of any man—takin' on about such a strip as him. Why, there's girls 'ud marry the first chance, just to spite him. And now, he's run off, too—nobody knows where."

"And you dare to talk to me of him!" cried Jessie, all her feelings kindling at the insult—"after what you've said about us, too! Man, go away!—leave me! I despise you!"

"You don't mean it—you can't!" cried Frost, the strong passion of his heart for the moment transforming him. "I've never said or done anything about you, or to you, but in love—all in love. But you're angry now. I'll go off, and come another time. You'll say, yes, yet."

"Never," cried Jessie. "With my last breath I'll say never."

But Frost was gone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ADVERSITY.

NOTWITHSTANDING all his previous misgivings, the result of the letter to Mr. Colville came on Ernest like a thunderbolt. He had yet to learn, in the stern experience of life, that merit, instead of being an advantage, often exposes its luckless possessor to perils which never reach mediocrity—that it provokes jealousy, enmity, envy, hatred, and detraction, and that, associated with poverty or dependence, it is a crime. As for showing consideration for meritorious service, the practice is almost obsolete. Still, as in the days of Pharaoh, the taskmasters of labour give no straw for their brick; zeal, diligence, and unwearying devotion they count as nothing, and requite only with

meanness, perfidy, and oppression. But there is a higher incentive to fidelity than the hope of reward: it is the sense of duty—the inspiration of religion, principle, and honour; and Ernest, who had obeyed this monitor, was now sustained by self-respect.

The little fund he had brought from Glynellan was still untouched, and with this in his purse, he arrived in the world's metropolis, the great mart of industry and talent. For hours he wandered about the streets bewildered, as if his admiration of all he saw, the stately shops, the regal buildings, and the crowded thoroughfares, could never be satiated, and in the endless labyrinth, he knew not where to turn. Night, at length, found him the inmate of a humble lodging, in one of the suburbs, where, worn in body and mind, he soon forgot his cares in sleep.

But morning recalled the question lately so often considered—what was he to do? He had reached the one spot on earth favourable to every kind of pursuit, and found, to his great disappointment, that, for all the prospect it opened, he might as well be in a desert. At first he fell into the mistake of answering advertisements, but after a reasonable expenditure in postage, without eliciting a single reply, became sensible that this was a delusion. Then, to leave no stone unturned, he sought to develop his literary abilities, and, among other things, wrote a profusion of poetry, offering it to various publishers, all of whom, however, declined even to look at it, and he tried the magazines and periodicals with the same result. At last, he made the discovery, that literature is not a thing to be taken up by every untried hand, and coined at once into money, but that it requires a peculiar training, and having lost his confidence, he for the moment gave up the contest.

His money was gradually dwindling, when chance led

him to the docks, and traversing those grand reservoirs of commerce, from which its golden tide flows as from a spring into the remotest sea, he paused before a vessel bound for the United States, one of the magnificent liners not yet superseded by steam. A placard on the mainmast announced its destination, and forthwith the idea flashed across him that here was a solution for his perplexities. He would go to America ! The El Dorado which he had sought unsuccessfully in London, he might find in the new world, where, amongst the thriving populations of young states, there was yet room for labour, and bread for honest industry. With the enthusiasm of an ardent mind, he instantly anticipated success, and became eager to carry out his design. It was as if some invisible intelligence had struck a long silent chord of his heart, and given it unnatural action. He paced to and fro in front of the ship, vainly endeavouring to curb and compose his thoughts, and view the project in a dispassionate light. He only conjured up new dreams, all suggesting the same step, and, besides these, there was the temptation, so irresistible when it presents itself, of visiting a distant land, of seeing and mixing with a strange people, and that longing after novelty which exercises a natural, though sometimes a dangerous influence, over the enterprising and the young.

There was no time to lose, as the ship was to sail in two days, and having made some inquiries on board, he proceeded to the broker's to arrange for his passage, which, caring nothing for a little discomfort, he took in the steerage, as the best accommodation his means could command. Indeed, he found, after purchasing a hammock, and a few necessaries for the voyage, that even this tasked his finances to the utmost, and would leave him to land at New York with only a few shillings in his pocket.

But he was not in a mood to be depressed by a prospect, which might have appeared discouraging enough to others.

By the middle of the next day, all his arrangements were completed, and having now, for the first time in many weeks, a few idle hours, he strolled leisurely through the streets, to take a last look at the great city. The ramble was not without its incident, or perhaps, its destiny. In passing round one of the fashionable Squares, he happened to glance into the inclosure, when he caught sight of a face and form too familiar to be readily forgotten. It was Emily Burge, in whom the interval of a year had developed a thousand new charms, and who, meeting his eye, recognized him directly, and came to the gate to accost him.

"I wonder how I knew you," she said, as they shook hands ; "you have altered so."

"You have altered too," replied Ernest, in a complimentary tone, "but I should have known you anywhere, and what a time it seems since I saw you !"

"So many changes have occurred since !" rejoined Emily, without making any allusion to his abrupt departure from Glynellan. "Papa has taken a house in the Square now, and we are coming up to town every year."

"You will like that."

"No ; I like the country best. We are kept so busy here, going from one place to another, that we have never a moment to ourselves."

"A constant round of gaiety," said Ernest. "You will become quite a lady of fashion."

Emily shook her head with a half-smile. "Miss Cramboy despairs of ever making me one," she said, "and, do you know, I suspect she has a preference for Bydvil herself, though she tries to conceal it."

"I can imagine that. But I have been very remiss not to inquire about Miss Cramboy. Of course, she is in town with you?"

"Oh, yes, she is in the grounds. You must come and see her."

"I shall be delighted." And he stepped into the inclosure. "How does the school get on?" he continued, as they proceeded round the walk.

"Oh! we've been obliged to give up the sciences," replied Emily. "The children were so dull, Miss Cramboy could make nothing of them, and they actually went to sleep while she was delivering a lecture on the laws of mechanics."

"I wonder so astute a person as Miss Cramboy expected any other result. And so the whole scheme is dropped now, I suppose?"

"Oh, no; but the children are only taught reading and writing at present."

"*Your* plan then, after all. And I dare say you are progressing, are you not?"

"Miss Cramboy thinks we ought to do more. But there she is! She will be so glad to see you."

"As I shall her," said Ernest. "I leave England to-morrow, and it is a great satisfaction to me to be able to bid her and yourself good-bye."

"You're going abroad then," said Emily, with a look of deep interest.

"To America."

"Will you be away long?"

"I hardly know yet. I am like the wanderer in the fairy tale—going to seek my fortune: so my return is quite uncertain."

"Well, I hope you will be as successful, and come back soon," said Emily, rather gravely. She tripped a pace or

two forward, to meet the governess, who was now advancing towards them. "See, who is here, Miss Cramboy," she said—"Mr. Ernest Glynn!"

Ernest received a cordial greeting.

"It's a curious psychological fact," observed Miss Cramboy, taking off her spectacles, and wiping the glasses with her handkerchief; then carefully replacing them on her nose—"that I was wondering what could possibly have become of you, Mr. Glynn, just as you came up. A similar thing has often happened to me before, in connexion with other persons, and it suggests the inquiry whether we haven't instinctively a perception of objects—that is, whether certain images are not cast upon the mind before they are visibly presented to the eye."

"That is investing our spiritual essence with great sensitiveness," replied Ernest.

"I am persuaded it is far more sensitive than is generally supposed," returned the governess. "Clairvoyance, indeed, is awakening us to the truth, while it discloses the latent sensibilities of matter; and before long, we shall find the spirit has functions we have never dreamt of. Nor is there anything really strange in this, as the spirit is the active, animating principle. Matter itself is inert—it derives its vitality from the spirit."

"No doubt," said Ernest, "but it is the medium between the spirit and extraneous things, and hence we must suppose the mind receives its impressions through the organs of the body."

"Of inanimate objects, perhaps," returned Miss Cramboy, "but this does not apply to the affinities between spirit and spirit. Thus my mind may have become sensible of your approach before I saw you with my eyes, as I believe it did. Be assured, we are approaching great

discoveries in this department of knowledge ; and much has already been done in America."

"Well, it *is* curious you should mention America," said Emily ; "for Mr. Glynn is going there."

"Going to America !" exclaimed Miss Cramboy. "What an interesting fact ! Now pray, Mr. Glynn, get yourself made a medium."

"For the spirit rapping, you mean," said Ernest, smiling. "It is impracticable, for I have no faith."

"Science never requires faith," replied Miss Cramboy : "it only asks investigation. We should never reject till we have examined."

"A wise maxim," said Ernest. "I will try to bear it always in mind. And now, Miss Cramboy, I must say farewell."

The governess pressed his hand, and a look beamed through her spectacles, which, in the emotion of the moment, Ernest thought more becoming to her than all her philosophy—though that, in moderation, was to him far from uninteresting.

"There is papa just going in," said Emily, directing his attention to the house. "You must say good-bye to him."

"Of course," replied Ernest.

A few paces brought them to the mansion, which was directly opposite the gate, when Mr. Burge, who was standing on the steps, observed them. Ernest, remembering his cordiality at their last meeting, held out his hand in a friendly way, never doubting a kind reception.

"You have the advantage of me, sir," said Mr. Burge, with his most majestic air, and as if he had never seen him before.

"Why, papa, don't you know Mr. Ernest Glynn ?" cried Emily.

"Oh!" drawled out the iron-master. "You must excuse me, sir, I'm very much engaged. I wish you good morning, sir."

And turning his back on Ernest he pushed past into the house. Emily, no less ashamed than grieved, was ready to sink to the ground, when Ernest silently wrung her hand and hurried off. He had yet to discover that our fair-weather friends are all Mr. Burges, and in the day of adversity turn their back upon us.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EMIGRANT SHIP.

WHAT a scene on board the emigrant ship! what a confusion, what a Babel! the decks, from one end to the other, piled with luggage, packages, stores, and hen-coops; above and below, swarming with passengers, of every age and degree, with rugged sailors gliding through the midst of them, and the captain and mate shouting together, while an incessant "Ay, ay, sir," and a grand chorus of "Hoy, hoy, hoy," from a score of voices, as the brave ship was hauled out of the docks, and taken in tow by a steamer, at once deafened and bewildered.

The steerage was an absolute chaos. Chests, hampers, and bundles, of every size and description, were so heaped together, that in places it was quite blocked up, and a passage could only be effected by climbing over a barricade. Every possible seat, the summit of a pile, its sides, and its base, had its occupant—sometimes, indeed, sup-

porting a whole group or family, with slim grown-up girls and prattling children—or a young married couple, with an infant in the woman's arms, or solitary, taciturn, and sullen-looking men. Here a few were still talking with friends they were to leave behind, and who, in dread of the inevitable parting, deferred going ashore till they reached Gravesend ; here again, women were sobbing, with bowed heads and bursting hearts, though loved and familiar voices, only to be silenced by death, still whispered hope and comfort. One had fallen into hysterics, and uttered loud, heart-rending cries, which rang through the ship, but, in the universal uproar, excited only a momentary interest. Some, on the other hand, maintained an air of perfect composure, while a few of the more reckless, or more selfish, indifferent to every exhibition of suffering, laughed and joked : and others took a rough meal on their boxes, as if the scene around had no real existence.

The persons composing this assemblage were of the most motley description—mechanics, clerks, small farmers, and smaller tradesmen—ploughmen in smock-frocks, London sharpers in shabby dress-coats, and a large sprinkling of Irish. There was the white-washed insolvent, fresh from Whitecross Street—the yet unsuspected defaulter and the runaway ; there was the honest adventurer, full of enterprise, hope, and resolution ; the delicate young milliner, and the Irish maid-servant, whose brother, after a year's sojourn in the golden land of labour, had sent home the money for her passage. And amongst all these it was easy to distinguish two or three sharp Yankee chapmen, who had come over to England with a speculation some few months before, and were now on their way home, with the proceeds of the expedition in their pockets.

At last the vessel reached Gravesend, and, amidst the confusion of partings and fresh arrivals, a strange sinister-looking man sprang on board, and glided unquestioned, and almost unobserved, through every part of the ship. He was a detective policeman, in search of a fugitive, but though, on information given, he might easily have laid his hand on two or three, the particular delinquent sought for was not to be seen, and the officer disappeared as he came.

Now commenced a regular clearance of the decks ; the ship's stores, which it seemed impossible to stow away, vanished like mist ; the mountains of luggage sank into the deep gulf of the hold ; the bedding was rolled up, and packed in the hammock-nettings ; the hen-coops were lashed against the bulwarks ; the boats were hoisted over the gunnels ; and before night, when the brave ship was well on her way, everything was in order.

To Ernest that night was one of suffering. The steerage, from being only a crowded dormitory, had become an hospital, as if the plague of Egypt had fallen on every couch, and struck its inmate down. The deadly sea-sickness prostrated the sturdiest and strongest, as well as the delicate and weak. Ernest, at sea for the first time, felt all its nausea, and all its depression. It seemed as if his head would split ; his brain turn. An intense apathy, a moral oblivion, oppressed and stupified him ; and his past life, his struggles, hopes, fears, and sorrows, were wholly forgotten in his physical helplessness. The hot, dense atmosphere—for the hatches had been put on, and a hundred berths were fitted around—almost stifled him, but, at the moment, he could hardly have moved to save his life. This is the worst effect of the visitation—the utter prostration it produces, making us incapable of the least exertion. But, in the midst of his suffering, he was

alive to the calls of humanity, and when he could not move to aid himself, rose to assist another, procuring a drink of water for one of his fellow-passengers, who had sunk to the last stage of exhaustion. To his surprise he felt better moving about, and dressing himself, he went on deck. The night, though dark, was fine, and the fresh breeze revived and cheered him. After pacing the deck for a time he sat down on a block, under the long boat, and, leaning back, gradually fell asleep.

Morning found the gallant ship off the Lizard, and Ernest, not yet himself, but more accustomed to the motion, strained his eyes at this last point of his native land. Others, too, were there, leaning over the bulwarks, with their gaze rivetted on those dear cliffs, which, alas ! they would never behold again. They were not mere travellers, but emigrants—exiles ; the bone and sinew and strength of our isle, cast out like mire ! What wonder that some, in the bitterness of their hearts, hurled back curses at its shore, while others were silent, but blessed it.

Suddenly there was a general stir on board. The captain, who had been scanning the horizon with his glass, called out to shorten sail. The shrill pipe of the boatswain rang through the ship, and in a moment the sails were hauled up, and the vessel hove-to.

Ernest now saw a small white sail, like a speck, on the water. The breeze was blowing fresh, and the little craft, with its outspread canvas wing, came flying along towards the ship, skimming over the waves as if it were a bird. Three streamers were hoisted in its top, a signal which the American captain well understood. The boat, indeed, brought out the fugitive whom the policeman had sought for at Gravesend, and who now came on board, with his ill-gotten wealth, a free and independent

gentleman. But in this world, money, no matter how obtained, covers all defects, and many a thief sits in a high place, and has worship in the presence of his fellows.

The good barque was again on her way. The wind freshened, and, as day advanced, the seamen, with whom Ernest was soon on friendly terms, were unanimous in predicting a gale. Nothing could be more distressing than the motion, as the vessel, with the wind almost aft, rolled about in the chops of the channel ; but Ernest persevered in remaining on deck, and gradually felt the good effect of his decision. In the evening he was able to lie down with comfort, and soon fell asleep.

He was awoke by a tremendous uproar on deck. Below, indeed, the noise and excitement were hardly less ; many of the passengers had left their berths, and thrown on their clothes, and Ernest was not slow to follow their example. Some were calling for a light ; others, in agitated voices, asked every one if there was any danger. Ernest made at once for the deck. The hatches had been battened down, and at the companion-ladder he encountered several women, who had started up half-dressed, but found themselves shut in. Quieting them as well as he could, he groped his way to a private ladder beyond, leading to the great cabin, and thence reached the deck.

It was a sublime, though appalling scene. The ship, heeled over by the gale, on one side was almost level with the water, while the other rose high up ; and, above, the sea stood like a huge wall—like a mountain, black, erect, and massive, yet seeming ready to topple down, and engulf all below. The tempest swept through the rigging like thunder, and broke in a whirlwind against the bulwarks, making every timber quiver. From the deep

trough in which the ship laboured, the sky was invisible, and Egyptian darkness filled the void, though the white crests of the waves, high overhead, gleamed like fire. The unvarying chant of the seamen came down from the dim yards as if they were wailing spirits hovering over the ship; while, amidst the roar of the storm, the captain, with the trumpet ever at his lips, shouted forth his orders in a voice that seemed to come from the great deep. Through all, the ship pitched, and tossed, and plunged, now almost diving into the water, now rising in defiance, the waves dashing furiously against her sides, and covering her decks with spray.

Ernest felt ashamed of being a spectator, while others, no stronger than himself, were endangering their lives for the ship's safety; but it required only to look around to know that he was powerless. At this moment, he observed a female figure standing directly under the yards, and seizing her arm, he drew her away. As he did so, a block fell from above, and split in two at their feet.

"What a deliverance!" exclaimed the girl, with emotion. "How much I am indebted to you! If you had not drawn me away, I should have been killed."

"It might not have struck you," replied Ernest, "but I thought you were in a dangerous situation, right under the yards. Hadn't you better go below?"

"Oh, no! My cabin is on the deck, in the round-house," replied the young lady, "but I like being here best. I seem safer."

"Safer!"

"Yes; I feel I am in the presence of God. I know He is here. When I look round, I see He layeth the beams of His chambers in the waters, maketh the clouds His chariot, and rideth on the wings of the wind."

"That may well give confidence, and to hear such a

sentiment from your lips, while we are so exposed to the tempest, is an incident to be remembered. But are you not afraid ?”

“No, I like to see the elements beating against each other, to hear the storm roar, and the waves rage. Nature is so mighty and so awful ! Who would miss such a spectacle as this, merely because of the danger ?”

“I confess I would not ; but I could hardly have believed it had no terrors for you.”

“Terrors it has. I know there is but a plank between us and destruction, and that any moment the vessel may founder. How the deck trembles beneath us ! how the masts crack, and strain, and groan ! One could imagine the ship was alive, and battling with the storm.”

“It certainly almost appears so. Now we are plunging down, the rope in my hand throbs with the effort, and I can hardly retain my grasp. But I wonder at your courage and self-possession. You have the spirit of a sailor.”

“Women have been sailors before now.”

“Yes, but they have been actuated by an ulterior object, not by mere love of the profession.”

“You think us incapable of facing danger, then, except for some personal end ? That is regarding us in a mean light indeed ; for if we are only courageous when our own happiness or interest is concerned, only to gratify our own selfishness, we can never attain to heroism.”

“You quite misapprehend me. I meant to say, that in the instances you refer to, where women have adopted the garb and the calling of the sailor, they have been influenced, not by a love of danger, but by the strong impulses of passion. This was not to be selfish : it was an act of affection, devotion, and self-sacrifice. To under-

stand it, one must be here, with death on every side of us, and know that while I, a man, stand powerless and helpless, those young girls have mounted the rigging in scenes like this, and shared all the perils of the hardest seamen. That was heroism, surely !”

“Still you think we must be sustained by a personal inspiration ? But women have braved the fury of the sea, and horrors as great as any around us, solely to carry aid to others, to people they have never seen, and never heard of ; and if I could forget the timidity of my sex, I should wish to emulate, not love-sick damsels, but such a heroine as Grace Darling. The motive in her was unimpeachable.”

“It was so in the others, too, but in her it was the highest that can animate our nature. You are differently placed, and in remaining here, are exposing yourself to danger without an object. See what a wave is rising before us ! I’m afraid it will wash over the ship.”

They were both holding by a hand-rail, but as the vessel rose to the towering sea, Ernest, as before, seized the girl’s arm, and grasped her firmly. As he had feared, the wave broke over the bows, and, pouring in a torrent from the fore-castle, swept down the main-deck up to their knees, receding with a violence that threatened to wash them overboard. Ernest felt his companion clinging to his breast, and he seemed to have the strength of a giant. Dark as it was, he saw her face was deadly pale, while her long hair streamed on the wind, giving her an appearance never to be forgotten.

The water, meanwhile, rushed out through the gullies, leaving them perfectly drenched.

“Now you are safe,” said Ernest. “Let me recommend you to go to your cabin.”

"You will think me a coward."

"No one could think that, after witnessing your conduct. But it is really imprudent to remain."

"Then, I will follow your advice."

Ernest still held her arm, and, seizing a favourable moment, assisted her across the deck to the roundhouse.

"Thank you for all your care," she said, as they reached the door. "I shall sit down in my cabin, and think of the storm. Good night."

She gave him her hand, with an air so unconstrained, yet so maidenly, that it would be difficult to describe. Ernest remained some time longer on deck, when he again sought his hammock, though more to ponder over his singular adventure than to sleep.

The incident had made a deep impression upon him, and, at first, he thought of it with pleasure and satisfaction. He was more struck with his new acquaintance, whose face he had hardly seen, and whose name he did not know, than many men would like to have owned, and her shadowy image was fixed vividly in his mind. But this was only the spell of a moment, natural to the situation in which he had been placed. Reflection brought more sober suggestions, presenting it in another light. He now harassed himself with the thought that the lady had supposed him to be a cabin passenger, like herself, as she no doubt had ; though it did not follow that, on discovering her error, she would look down upon him as an inferior, and abjure his further acquaintance. But the example of Mr. Burge was a lesson not easily effaced, and he determined, by keeping out of her sight for the remainder of the voyage, not to expose himself to a repetition of such an affront. And, indeed, he was not sorry to avert the humiliation of a discovery, for poverty is a blemish which the best of us like to conceal.

The gale, after continuing unabated through the night, grew less violent in the morning, but the weather remained very rough for several days. Few, therefore, ventured on deck, and Ernest was not of the number. But clear skies and a light breeze brought up the whole company, and the deck swarmed with cheerful groups, men, women, and children, diverting themselves as they best could. The afterpart of the ship was appropriated to the cabin passengers ; for'ard, from the main-hatchway, to those of the steerage ; consequently, Ernest was not likely to encounter the young lady, so long as he chose to shun her, and, by never looking aft, he took care to avoid the chance of a recognition. It cost him more trouble to repel the advances of some of the steerage passengers ; but, besides being cautious in forming acquaintances, he felt that fortune had thrown him into rather questionable society, and persisted in holding himself aloof. But, while others were devoured with *ennui*, he found plenty of amusement, and the voyage, instead of being irksome, constantly presented him with some object of interest. He would stand for hours on the forecastle, watching the porpoises tumble round the bows, or the gambols of a shoal of bonitas, as they raced alongside. Now a strange sail hove in sight ; now some monster of the deep, a dolphin or a shark, kept abreast of the ship ; now he beguiled the time with his favourite "Spectator," the only relic of his library. But night, with its calm and placid stillness, was his season of enjoyment. Then he delighted to sit, solitary and unnoticed, under the stern of the long-boat, and ruminate without interruption. The lofty sky, studded with a million stars—the boundless ocean, immensity above and around, suggested to his mind a thousand reflections, pure, grand, and elevating. Imagination led him back to the time when, after years

of anticipation, Columbus first navigated that trackless sea, leading his three sorry caravels over its summer waves in uncertainty and doubt. How hopefully he had seized on every indication of approaching land—every floating weed, and flock of birds, and sought to allay, by these tokens, the murmurs of his despairing crew. But still nothing presented itself but the same blank void, the same illimitable sea; and in the silence of night, his eye scanned the horizon, in vain quest of the long-expected land. What is it rises before him so suddenly, making his heart beat high, and his bosom swell with expectation? A LIGHT! yes, from the door of an Indian's hut, amidst the solitude of yet unseen mountains, gleams a light that will never be extinguished; and the bold mariner has reached, not the Western Asia of his dreams, not the fabled lands of Prester John or Marco Polo, but a NEW WORLD.

One night, Ernest had lingered in his nook later than usual, and had just reached the main hatchway, on his way below, when he came suddenly on two ladies, who were pacing the quarter-deck, and the younger of whom he recognised as his companion in the storm. With some confusion he returned her bow, and passed on, not without an impression that she had herself been inclined to stop. He almost doubted whether politeness did not require such an attention on his own part, though, on reflection, he was confirmed in his previous views, and believed that he should spare himself future mortification by rigidly carrying them out.

But prudent thoughts could not still the emotions that began to arise in his heart. In that hurried encounter, the hitherto shadowy image was converted into a real and sensible object, invested with a permanent interest. He could not escape from its presence, and no longer

resisted its fascination—though this submission, perhaps more dangerously for his peace, was only in his solitary musings, and his resolve to shun further intercourse was unchanged.

The period of his probation was drawing to a close, for, with the morning light, a cry was heard from the top—a cry that brought every soul to the deck ; it was “LAND ON THE LARBOARD BOW !”

CHAPTER XX.

ANOTHER WORLD.

LAND ! the land of promise, of freedom, of plenty ! the land flowing with milk and honey, where the rich man, with his hundred manors and townships, counts but one, and the poor man has “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work.” What an opening ! what a prospect ! Our own language still, but a new form of government, a new people, a new hemisphere. Here, for ages to come, all Europe may throw in its surplus population, and there will still be room. Here, flesh and blood, in their naked strength, are wealth, life, energy, and power. Here only the negro is a slave, and he dances in his chains.

Is it indeed so ? Have we, in crossing the Atlantic, left behind us the ill-savour of Moab, and the gods of Egypt ? Alas, no ! We are still among men. Poor human nature, with its heritage of frailty, is the same in America as in Europe. Here, in the wilderness, it has set up its calf, and there are no lack of worshippers. But virtue still retains her remnant, and, among the tribes, there are ten thousand, who have not bent their knees to MAMMON.

Ernest found himself in one of those vast ordinaries, which in New York are called hotels, where the stranger, fresh from European restraints, receives his first lesson in American life. The gong was just announcing the dinner hour, and in flocked people of all ranks, scrambling up to the well-spread board, a Yankee table d'hôte, as if the last comer had to forfeit his rations. Ernest was perfectly bewildered by the hurry and confusion of the scene, till, by some inscrutable process, every one subsided into a seat. Then commenced such a clatter on the plates, as few untrained ears could withstand. Even London's Mansion-house never heard such a din. And no one lost any time—except Ernest, who, with English simplicity, sat looking on, knife and fork in hand, like a rower resting on his oars, and quite unmindful that he was losing the tide—this, too, notwithstanding that a good-natured fellow on his right, in the midst of his own exertions, strove to rouse his attention by gasping forth, every now and then, the name of some choice dish, while he gave him a nudge with his elbow. At length, all was over, and, through his own negligence, Ernest had made but an apology for a dinner, famishing in the midst of plenty. His friendly neighbour now found time to address him.

“Just landed?” he asked.

“Yes,” was the reply.

“Come in a liner?”

“In the ‘Jefferson.’”

“Cabin passage or steerage?”

“Steerage.”

“Pretty well found on board?”

“Pretty well.”

“I expect you are rather astonished at this country?”

“Rather so.”

"Come on spec?"

"I hope to obtain employment."

The American turned a sharp glance over his face.

"What can you turn your hand to?" he said.

"My means will not allow me to be fastidious," replied Ernest, with a good-humoured smile, and not without a hope, from the interest he manifested, that the inquirer might be disposed to give him some useful information. "Anything respectable."

"Respectable. Ah! there you come out with your old-world pride. Anything's respectable if it's honest. You must turn-to at anything in this country, if you want to make a do of it; and if one thing doesn't answer, try another. You'll hit the right nail at last. *Experientia docet*—meaning experience does it. We're a go-a-head people, and can't stand about fixins. I've tried a dozen specs myself, and now I'm just comin' out with another. To-morrow I commence on an entirely new wrinkle."

"Indeed."

"Yes, as an auctioneer. But come, I see you're a likely sort. What can you do?"

"Shall I leave out the respectable, and say I will try anything?"

"That's more like. But I expect you're not much at calculating."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because you haven't come out in that line with your dinner. I expect you should calculate every mouthful, and keep the knife and fork going like a piston. Quick at dinner, quick at calculation. But you'll get on better in time. Experience does it; I'd pay anything for experience, except dollars. So you're ready for the first berth that offers?"

"Yes."

"Then here's at you straight. I want a clerk, and came here on the look-out, guessing old 'Jeff' had brought out a few. Shall we strike a bargain?"

"I'm willing."

"Come along, then. We'll talk it over at my store, and you shall have the rest of the day to practise calculation! You'll soon know how many cents go to a dollar. Experience does it."

And they left the hotel together.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AUCTION MART.

ANYTHING IS RESPECTABLE, IF IT IS HONEST. What a sentiment to put in capitals! Yet, strange to say, Ernest was impressed by it. Here in England, where we have the advantage of being trained up in the worship of Moloch—your pardon, dear reader, of Mammon—such a vulgarity can only excite derision; but, in fact, Ernest was so far Americanised already. He actually believed, despite that time-honoured proverb which has become an article of our faith, that money did not make the man, although it might, in the estimation of our arrogant parvenus, make the gentleman.

The rostrum of Selim Driver, his new employer, was in Bowery; and here, on the following morning, Ernest was early at his post, preparing for the great business of the day, which was to be signalized by Selim's first sale. The young auctioneer had already, as he confidently informed Ernest, been a farmer, a horse-swapper, and a swamp-doctor; had kept a general store, travelled for orders, and

"come out strong" as a portrait-painter ; and finally, had sailed as a supercargo, and been on a whaling voyage. In all these callings he had picked up a great deal of "experience," but very few dollars.

The most heterogeneous assortment of articles, from a lady's workbox to a bag of sugar, or, as Selim metaphorically observed, "from a ship's anchor to a marlin-spike," were heaped round the store, purporting to be the stock of a bankrupt factor, but really being odds and ends accumulated in a variety of ways, some from Selim's past speculations, and some from stores in the city, where they had been turned out to make room for new goods. These were piled round Selim and Ernest like a barricade, under the superintendence of a free black, named "General Jackson," who was overlooked from the rostrum by Selim.

"Now, you lazy, jabbering old Hickory, you, look alive, will you ? and mind how you put down that glass vase, or you'll run your head against a lamp-post," cried Selim, as the arrangements proceeded.

"Yes, massa, me take care," replied the General.

"You'll take care to smash it, I expect. Ah ! there it goes !—you infernal thick-headed son of a dead nigger."

"Not mean do it, massa," said the General, calmly contemplating the fragments. "He jump out my hand. Neber see such a ting—neber my life."

"Why, you raptandering, filibustering old pirate, I saw you throw it down like a red-hot poker. Have you got no joints in your claws, woolly-head ? Now I'll tell you what it is. You know my bowie-knife ?"

"Yes, massa."

"I expect it's pretty sharp ?"

"'Spect so, massa."

"Well, the first time I see you catch hold of anything breakable, mind—glass, china, or crockery, I'll stick it

into you, if your namesake, General Jackson, stood by, just as he was when he whopped the Britishers at New Orleans. I consider he's let me off cheap," he added to Ernest—"only one small imitation vase, value five cents."

"I'm sorry it should have happened," replied Ernest.

"Cheap, I assure you," rejoined Selim ; "I've took it out in experience. I know now that rampscampering nigger aint to be trusted with breakables, and that's worth the money. I don't mind expense, if I get experience. But they're beginning to come in now. I calculate we shall have a few."

A motley assemblage, indeed, soon collected in the auction-room, attracted alike by the bill of fare without, and the display within. There was the usual allowance of brokers and old housekeepers, come to look out for bargains, with a sprinkling of country-folk, and two or three loafers from "away east" and "down west," who had been drawn in by curiosity, and were immediately singled out as victims by the quick eye of Selim. Nothing could be more equitable, however, than the general distribution of the goods, which was regulated on the principle of one prize to four blanks, so that if a person wished to purchase an article of any utility, he had to take with it four incumbrances, which were of no use whatever, but adding materially to the cost.

"Before I begin, ladies and gentlemen," said Selim, "I wish you all to understand that this is a final and unreserved sale, without dodging or shuffling. That is a course which I, as an independent citizen, would never condescend to. Moreover, the goods are all A 1, and they're to be sold for whatever they'll fetch. It's a regular out-and-out, genuine sale, by order, and seldom has it been my lot to offer to public competition such a valuable

assortment of articles at such a sacrifice. People in trade may complain of the figures at which these astounding bargains will go, but I expect that, under the free institutions of this country, we have a right, as independent citizens, to part with our goods on any terms we please." Here there was a buzz of approbation from the audience.—"And, acting under the instructions I have received, and bearing in mind my privileges as an American citizen [applause renewed] I shall not be deterred, by any threats or intimidation, from carrying out my object; and I hereby give notice that I carry a bowie-knife for my protection, which I expect you, old Hickory—" and his look appealed to General Jackson, "know is pretty sharp."

"'Spect so, massa," testified the General.

"The first lot which I shall offer for your notice, ma'am," resumed Selim, striking down an eager old lady, is a valuable housekeeping one, comprising jugs, mugs, cups, saucers, bottles, tumblers, pie-dishes, pudding-basins, a coffee-mill, a soap-box, two canisters, a kitchen-poker, and a dog-kennel. Two dollars bid for this lot! only two dollars, a valuable housekeeping lot, ladies, going for two dollars. Ah! I thought so—two and a quarter dollars. Jugs, mugs, cups, saucers, bottles, tumblers, pie-dishes, pudding-basins, a coffee-mill, a soap-box, two canisters, a kitchen-poker, and a dog-kennel for two and a quarter dollars. Why the dog-kennel was never made for the money. Just hand round the crockery, there, and let the articles be seen. Ah! you woolly-headed nigger, you lay your paws on 'em if you dare. Has any gentleman got a revolver in his pocket, that I may give that black villain his fixins?"

"Me no touch, massa. Me no look at him."

"Two dollars and a half bid—three! Going for three dollars,"—cried Selim, proclaiming an imaginary bid,

which had an immediate effect on the eager old lady. "Three dollars and a quarter—and a half"—pursued the artful salesman, with another effort of the imagination—"and a half—going for three dollars and a half—such a bargain, ma'am—jugs, mugs, cups, saucers, bottles, tumblers, pie-dishes, pudding-basins, a coffee-mill, a soap-box, two canisters, a kitchen-poker, and a dog-kennel—this valuable lot for three dollars and a half—the coffee-mill would fetch the money in your State, sir. Ah! three and a half—going—going—three—and"—the old lady, just as Selim was about to try back, gave way—"three quarters. Gone!"

"I expect you won't ask much for yon rifle?" cried a Southern, from beneath his huge straw-hat.

"That lot, sir, airnt to come on just yet," replied the auctioneer. "We'll come to it by and by."

"I reckon you'll bring it on slick, stranger," returned the Southern; "for I'm away by the first steamer. You bring it on now, d'ye hear."

"You speak like a free and independent citizen, and my platform is the Union and no secession," said Selim, eliciting a burst of applause; "therefore, I will take the lot at once, just to oblige you. It consists of this beautiful rifle, a dozen bottles, and a coal-skuttle—a truly useful assortment. Just hand them up here. You nigger, if you go within a yard of them bottles! Let him have the rifle—it airnt loaded. A dollar bid. What sport, airnt it?—a dollar for a first-chop rifle, a dozen bottles, and a coal-skuttle. Two dollars! Come, we're getting on. That's right, sir—you look it over. I see you know what a rifle is. *An old one?* All the better, sir. We can't make such rifles as that now, with all our revolving dodges. That rifle was out in '14, when old Hickory—not you, you cat-staring nigger—made the Britishers

walk. Three dollars bid. Four dollars. Four dollars. That rifle would 'most hit a man round the corner. For four dollars—four and a half," said Selim, recurring to his imagination—four and a half!" but the Southern was immovable, and Selim plunged on without bidders—"four and three quarters—five—going for five dollars. Your bid, sir, I expect, airnt it."

"I guess I airnt such a tarnal flat, stranger," replied the Southern.

"Whose bid is it, then?" asked Selim, with feigned surprise. "Ladies and gentlemen, I've lost my bid. Let's see, I'll try back. Four dollars!—your bid was four dollars, then, sir?"

"I calculate that's the figure," returned the Southern.

"Four dollars bid—four dollars for this most valuable lot!" cried Selim. "Four dollars—going—going—I'd give three myself for the coal-skuttle—go—go—gone!"

"Now I'll fix you, stranger," said the Southern, the fortunate purchaser. "You bid three dollars for the coal-box, and I'll give you the bottles in; and there's t'other dollar for the rifle, and I calculate 'taint a very tall figure—that's a fact!" And throwing down a dollar, he walked off with the gun, amidst the laughter of the company.

"I say, you!—hi! stop him!" cried Selim. But the popular voice was on the side of the Southern, and Selim, after a moment's hesitation, thought it better to join in the laugh against himself. The resolution was a wise one, as the little incident, by promoting a general feeling of good-humour, gave a new impetus to the sale; and when the auction was over, he had no reason to complain of the result. Besides, he added to his experience.

CHAPTER XXII.

CROSSING THE BROOK.

ERNEST was not long content with his situation at the auction-mart. It was not that he could complain of the duties, which were light, and far from disagreeable, but he began to have doubts, from what he observed, whether the calling was really as honest as Selim had represented. The number of "alarming sacrifices" and "awful failures" paraded at the mart, in letters of Brogdignagian proportions, was indeed fabulous, and it soon became apparent that they were equally so in fact. Ernest ventured to remonstrate with his employer on a course so disingenuous, but Selim assured him, in a good-humoured but decisive way, that custom had legitimated these pious frauds, without which no business could be carried on. The "slow dodge" did not suit the New Yorkers. Ernest could say no more : he only stipulated that he should be no way implicated in such "tricks of trade," and should be permitted to go altogether as soon as he could procure a more suitable engagement. In America, it is the employed who make terms, not the employer.

Sales did not occur every day, and sometimes, when there was nothing to do at the mart, Ernest was relieved from attendance, and allowed to take the day to himself. Then he would ramble into the country, in search of those delightful nooks which Washington Irving has made so familiar to us, but which, in the midst of daily transformations, a stranger is rather puzzled to find. Pretty

spots, however, he did discover, worthy even to be described by the eloquent Columbian, and here he loved to pursue his favourite study of botany, or throwing himself on the sward, under the shade of an umbrageous tree, to seek in Knickerbocker's history the scenes no longer traceable around. In an excursion of this kind, repairing one morning to a favourite haunt, on the banks of the Hudson, he found the spot occupied by a festive company, engaged in a pic-nic; and he was walking away, when a voice called to him, and presently he was overtaken by a young man of his own age, and of prepossessing appearance, who said that he was commissioned by a lady of the party to request his return.

"It must be a mistake, I think," replied Ernest, "for I am quite unknown here."

"Not so much as you think," answered the other, smiling. "My cousin, Miss Meredith, came over from England with you, in the 'Jefferson,' and we are all much indebted to you for your attention to her."

Ernest muttered an incoherent reply; for at this moment, glancing at the group, he recognised the young girl whose acquaintance he had made during the voyage from England, and who had since occupied only too large a share of his thoughts.

Clara Meredith—for so she was named—had evidently given her friends a favourable account of him, for on approaching the party, he was received with kindly glances by all, and his reception by Clara herself was most cordial. Her father, an elderly gentleman, of imposing appearance, introduced as "Judge" Meredith, shook him heartily by the hand, and made room for him between himself and Clara.

"Thus we admit you immediately to all the rights of citizenship," he said, in an authoritative tone, being rather

given to laying down the law. "It is the custom of our country, and one of the first principles of the constitution. Directly you land on our happy shores, you may claim the rights of a citizen, and equality with the foremost people in the state. Equality is the root of our independence. Major," he added to an individual on his other side, in an undress military uniform, "you must know our young friend here, Mr. Glynn—my brother-in-law, Major Hornblower, of the United States army, Mr. Glynn—a distinguished officer, who has had more tussles with the Indians in the Black Swamp territory than I have ever had fees."

The Major, a weather-beaten old fellow, with a military air, shook hands with Ernest, and forthwith proffered his tobacco-box, an invitation that was politely declined. The Major proved to be of a musical turn of mind, and for the remainder of the day was constantly humming a tune, interlarding his observations with a fragmentary accompaniment.

"Very fine country this, I guess—*tum-ta-rum-tum, tum-ta-rum-tum*," he said to Ernest. "Remarkable people over here—*tum-ta-rum-tum, tum-ta-rum-tum*. Double-quick time's our constant pace—*tum-ta-rum-tum, tum-ta-rum-tum*."

"We're a practical people, Major," observed a beardless young gentleman, "and that is the secret of our success. Our railroads, our steamers, and our clippers all denote it. We're eminently practical—that's a fact."

"You mean you are yourself, Mr. Quince," remarked a pretty, arch-looking girl. "To be practical seems the sole aim of your existence. I should not be surprised if you were to hit upon some substitute for a corkscrew, now that foolish Pompey has come away without one."

Mr. Quince smiled complacently. "The fact is, Miss Maria Winchcombe, I'm always prepared," he replied. "A practical man always is. As to the corkscrew, that is easily remedied ; for my clasp-knife contains, besides the large back, two pen-blades, a rasp, a chisel, a corn-cutter, a sticker, a gimlet, a screwdriver, a picklock, a toothpick, and a corkscrew."

"A complete chest of tools !" exclaimed Miss Maria Winchcombe, laughing.

"The corkscrew ! where's the corkscrew," cried several voices, gasping for a drink.

"You're rather in a hurry, I expect," said Mr. Quince, thrusting his hand into his coat. But pocket after pocket was searched, amidst the breathless expectations of thirsty souls, without result. The practical man had left his wondrous clasp-knife at home.

"Oh, Mr. Quince, you'll lose your character !" said Miss Maria Winchcombe. "I declare, you're as bad as Pompey."

But the recreant Pompey, a sable representative of the great Roman, at this moment produced a corkscrew, and, in the diversion thus created, Mr. Quince escaped further rallying. The Major instantly proffered his tobacco-box to the dispenser of the liquors, and received as an acknowledgment the first magnum of sherry-cobbler, which disappeared down his throat like magic.

Meanwhile Ernest had been engaged with Clara.

"I thought you intended not to speak to me again," said the fair American.

"How could you think that ?" answered Ernest, innocently.

"Because you so studiously avoided me."

"I could never be insensible of your kindness," replied

Ernest, "but to be frank, I am obliged to live very retired. In this country one need not be ashamed to say so."

"Then why *are* you ashamed of it? No one here will quarrel with you on that account, or think the less of you. We have a higher standard of merit than the dollar." There was a touch of resentment in her tone, which she hardly sought to disguise, but in a moment her manner was again kind and *riant*. "But we must forgive you such feelings at first," she continued. "You will have a better opinion of us by and by."

"I can hardly have a better; for everything I have seen here is great and liberal: besides which you give a home to the unfortunate of all countries, and provide them with the means of subsistence."

"Such is the character I should wish my country always to bear," said Clara. "Other nations may boast of their triumphs in war; let America be great in peace. I'm glad you don't think us such savages as English travellers report."

"On the contrary, I see much we might copy with advantage—though, of course, there are some things at variance with my habits and principles."

"And they are?"

"You mustn't ask me yet."

"Some other time you will tell me. I should like excessively to know."

"But, perhaps, we may differ about them; for what may strike me as singular you may consider very common-place."

"Oh, these are impressions you naturally form on first coming here, where everything is so different from what you have been accustomed to, even to our

system of government. But you will become more republican after a time."

"You think so?"

"I hope so," said Clara, as their eyes met.

"Mr. Glynn will never be a republican," said her cousin, who had been watching their growing intimacy with uneasy glances. "He has been reared under an oligarchy, and it is easy to see he is inoculated with its prejudices."

"You are mistaken," replied Ernest, "I have always lived under a constitutional monarchy till I came to America."

"You can't call England a constitutional country, when the aristocracy are the ruling power, and the mass of the people little better than serfs."

"You have a strange idea of our condition, sir," answered Ernest, good-temperedly. "It is the aim of our laws to give each interest an equal status in the government, so that none shall predominate, and the experience of a thousand years attests the wisdom of the arrangement. England is the most ancient monarchy in the world, and promises to survive every other."

"That isn't giving it a very long lease," replied the American, with a sneer.

"Nephew, you are trenching on politics, which are out of our pale to-day," said the Judge, laying down the law in his most impressive fashion. "Such an overt act renders you liable to a suit for trespass, and if Mr. Glynn were a lady, I should mulct you in a forfeit." This announcement elicited a general titter from the ladies, led on by Miss Maria Winchcombe. "Silence in the court," pursued the Judge—and the titter was renewed. "Any lady who opens her mouth shall not

be married this year." Death-like stillness.—"Nephew, you are adjudged to make a bowl of your own particular iced punch, in your best style."

"Iced punch is a very smart liquor, *rum-ta-rum-tum, rum-ta-rum-tum,*" said the Major. "Will you take a little 'bacco? *rum-ta-rum-tum, rum-ta-rum-tum.*"

Here there was a scream from Miss Maria Winchcombe, producing the greatest consternation among the fairer portion of the company.

"Oh, the snake!" "a rattle-snake!" was echoed by half-a-dozen voices.

"Where is it? where?"

Every one was up in a moment; the ladies, in a paroxysm of terror, all stood still and screamed; the gentlemen armed themselves with empty bottles, knives, and silver forks; and the panic was at its height, when another scream from Miss Maria Winchcombe, at the top of her voice, brought all the gentlemen to her assistance.

"There it is!" she exclaimed, pointing to a small spider on her dress.

"What, that?"

"Yes."

"A pretty rattlesnake!"

Such a hearty laugh as followed this discovery, though two or three of the ladies, when they were fairly seated again, privately disseminated their opinion that Miss Maria Winchcombe had made much ado about nothing, and that "it was all affectation." But the iced punch, by its exhilarating influence, speedily restored good humour, and a proposal to take a ramble in the woods was received with unmingled satisfaction by the whole company.

Clara was turning to her cousin, intending to take his

arm, when, happening to look up, the disappointment expressed in Ernest's face arrested her hand, and the next moment she walked away with the young Englishman. Alfred Wilmore followed them with his eye till he was pounced upon by an isolated young lady, and carried off in another direction.

"I think this is one of the prettiest spots in our State," said Clara, as Ernest led her into the wood. "I remember it from childhood, and it was the first excursion I made on my return home."

"I don't wonder at its making an impression upon you," replied Ernest; "for it is not a scene to be forgotten. But, perhaps, you were not so very long absent."

"Indeed I was—too long. It was the last wish of my mother that my education should be finished in England, among her relatives—for she was a countrywoman of your's; and my father, though very averse to the arrangement, faithfully carried it out. I was away for three years."

"Then you, too, are almost an Englishwoman?"

"No!" answered Clara, proudly; "I am an American. When I left home my father was afraid my nationality would be impaired, and that I would return to America with a distaste for our institutions, but all I have heard and seen has only confirmed the predilections which he first instilled in my mind. America is the land of my birth and the land of my heart. I love her as she is, for what she is, and for what she will become."

"Such a country may well command the devotion of her children," said Ernest.

"And of her adopted children, too, may she not?"

"Certainly, if the adoption is mutual."

"She has the same claim on all who seek her shores.

If they find here a refuge and home, and an honourable career open to them, they receive from her the succour of a parent, and owe her in return the duty of children."

"There I must differ from you. Unquestionably she has this claim on her own citizens, and on those who become so by naturalization, but not on mere sojourners. The world is open to every one, and we are at liberty to settle where we please, but we owe allegiance only to the land of our birth."

"On settling here do you not renounce that allegiance?"

"Not unless I become a naturalized citizen."

"Which, of course, you will," said Clara.

Ernest's reply was a smile, and he held on his arm, which had made him feel so proud and happy, relaxed, though but for a moment. Just then they came to a little brook, meandering through the wood, like a stream of crystal, and as it babbled over the stones, with the trees spread above, like a verdant bower, the charm of melody was added to the scene, awaking a corresponding feeling in both their hearts.

"What a retreat!" exclaimed Ernest, as he looked around. "It's a perfect little Arcadia, where one might hide from the world and learn to forget it."

"You would never learn that," said Clara, with a glance at his manly figure.

"Why do you think so?"

"Because you are ambitious, and are formed by nature to take a part in it—because its toils and struggles, which overwhelm some men, are life and breath to you, and you require its excitement and occupations."

"Admitting this, though only for argument's sake, surely retirement, too, has its attractions. There have

even been moments when I have thought it might be the happiest state."

"Those were moments of depression, then, and not the natural suggestion of your mind ; and, remember, he who would win the race must not faint on the road."

"No, indeed," said Ernest. "If success were easy, so many would achieve it that it would hardly be worth seeking ; but though the labour, the disappointments, or even the failures of life, may not give us a distaste for it, we may become disgusted by its meannesses and treacheries. They make the struggle insupportable, as well as painful. Then we seem to be losing time, and to partake of the littleness and hollowness of things around us. At least, such reflections have occurred to myself, and have made me feel I required a higher incentive to action than the mere desire of success."

"There is the admiration success inspires, and the respect and applause of the world."

"Too often masking envy and detraction," observed Ernest. "Can we find no better spur than these ?"

"The temptations of power or fame," said Clara, "or the hope of writing your name in history, or winning a place in literature or art."

"Great inducements, no doubt, but we may be stimulated by a higher motive than any they can furnish."

"I should like to know *your* motive, then."

"I don't say it is mine, but it is one which might influence everybody. Human endowments are more equally distributed than is generally supposed, and exertion must have the effect of drawing them out. What higher object can we have than the development of our own faculties ? Yet how many of us spend our lives in the pursuit of wealth, or worldly advancement, without attaining our

end, and quite ignorant of the gold buried within us, though it requires but an effort to lay it bare."

"Too many, I can well believe, but there are far more whom nature has never invested with these attributes. You assume we are all endowed alike."

"By no means. I think there is, as a rule, some approach to equality in the distribution of our gifts, but not in their character. What I believe, is, that they may remain unknown, not only to the world, but to ourselves, unless we explore our minds in search of them."

"Then, you adopt the conclusion of Gray, that—

'Many a flower is born to blush unseen.'"

"On the contrary, I think nothing is designed to be unseen. To me it appears, we are all placed in the situation best adapted for the development of the particular faculties with which we are provided—some of the moral, some of the intellectual, some of the physical; some to exercise their invention, others their virtue, others their endurance; and others, again, their physical strength, hardihood, or activity. But these faculties may remain latent, because we never suspect their existence, and hence it is often in our own hands to make ourselves very different beings from what we are."

"Isn't this a new philosophy?"

"It is not new in nature; for we observe every tree and plant, every physical and animal provision, adjusted with the nicest regard to its peculiar habit; and is it likely that man, the chief of all, should be left to chance? We must feel there is no state so degraded but it admits of self-culture, and none so exalted but that self-culture will exalt it higher. But here we are at the brook, and you will like to turn back."

"That will not be carrying out your principles. Besides, I've often crossed it before."

"But I'm afraid you'll get wet."

"You can't frighten me. I'm determined to make the attempt."

Four or five stones, about a foot apart, formed a little ford over the brook, which was only ankle-deep, and the passage was easy enough, as by standing on the middle stone, Ernest was able to hand her across. But just as she reached the opposite bank, her foot slipped, and she would have fallen in, if Ernest, slipping his arm round her, had not lifted her up. It was not the first time he had encircled her delicate waist, and his heart beat quick as he raised his eyes, and thought, from her look, that she remembered the night of the storm.

"Are you wet?" he asked, anxiously.

"Not the least."

She smiled as he glanced down at her tiny feet, but at this moment she caught sight of Alfred Wilmore, who was watching them from the opposite bank.

"Why, Alfred, what's the matter with you?" she said. "You look quite ill."

"I *am* ill," answered Wilmore, involuntarily pressing his hand on his heart.

"How unfortunate! I wanted you to help me over the bank."

He made no reply, but sprang to her side.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EQUALITY.

ERNEST had another stimulus to exertion, beyond what he had mentioned in his conversation with Clara, and which, notwithstanding his silence, he had felt, at the moment, like a secret fire in his heart, and that was love—the noblest incentive, the purest, the best ; which, in a mortal point of view, redeems us from the depravity of our sordid, selfish, and worthless nature. It was the same gentle influence of woman to which we owe all our impressions of good—the gentle guardian influence that attends us, through prosperity and through adversity, from the cradle to the grave.

The conviction that it was all this, if acquired by a sad experience, was not an unwelcome one to Ernest ; for it afforded him both consolation and encouragement. He had come on to the great stage of life, eager to act equitably to every one, and, on all occasions, to deny and ignore himself if he could benefit others,—honest, frank, generous, and truthful, and that stern task-master, the world, had treated him with uniform perfidy, meanness, and ingratitude. Thus, as time wore on, his warm sympathies had turned again into his bosom, and he learnt how just and benignant is that counsel of Holy Writ—“to put no trust in man.”

Well would it be were this bitter truth impressed more earnestly upon us, before we commence the great struggle, when we should perhaps be spared infinite pain and mor-

tification ! But the maudlin sensibility of the day teaches another doctrine, equally at variance with the Divine revelation and with human experience, and we are left to acquire the lesson as we best can. Full soon it forces itself upon us, and the bloom is yet on our cheek when we are grey in this seared wisdom. The employer we have served too well oppresses and wrongs us ; the friend of our bosom, with whom we have so often taken counsel, has become a Judas ; the man we have loaded with favours, is a secret enemy ; the miserable creature of our bounty, bites the hand that feeds him.

Let us tear the mask from our faces, and hold the mirror up to them. Look on this picture and on this—on the man tricked out in all the bravery of his professions, and on the same abject being shivering in the nakedness of his acts.

The spectacle is fruitful of admonition. It teaches us to be meek, patient, considerate, and forbearing ; we are brought to estimate, at its proper value, the unbiassed approval of a good conscience—to understand that truth and honour are more precious than a petty advantage, and that to serve an enemy, when events have placed him in our power, is sweeter than revenge. If we do good to those only who do good to us, how can we maintain our self-respect ?

Nor are we left to the hard ordeal without a helper. Man is false, but woman is true. Man sold the Redeemer himself for thirty pieces of silver, while woman—a woman defaced by guilt, washed his feet with her tears.

Without her gentle companionship, her endurance, her ministering tenderness—without her beauty of mind and person, her constancy, truthfulness, and example, what should we be ? How shuffle on this mortal coil, this dreary pilgrimage ! From her we derive every inspiration

of heroism and every generous impulse, from the moment that we draw nurture from her breast till she closes our eyes in their last long sleep, and only in her presence can we taste the poor lees of earthly happiness. Even Paradise, we are told, was lonely and cheerless, till it was graced by Eve.

It was this sweet, absorbing influence that now seized upon Ernest, imparting to life a new charm, a new object. Love, the one blessed passion of our nature, at once transformed, elevated, and inspired him, developing feelings and sympathies hitherto closeted, like a sealed spring, in his soul. He felt that he could encounter any obstacle, face any difficulty, endure any privation, to win, in return, the mistress of his affections. To her he gave every thought, every hope, every wish. He dreamt of her ; he prayed for her. Miserable man ! thus to enshrine an idol in the temple of his mind.

In this impassioned mood he presented himself at the handsome mansion of Judge Meredith, conformably to an invitation from the worshipful functionary himself. Though studiously simple, the appearance of the house conveyed such an idea of the wealth of the owner that it was not calculated to encourage his aspirations, reminding him, in characters only too forcible, that between Clara and himself there was a great gulf, which nothing but a bridge of dollars could span. But when did such a consideration dismay a lover ?—cheered, perhaps, by the flattering hope that his devotion is not unappreciated by its object, and the reflection that worth, not gold, is the precious treasure which woman covets ! One thing only he was resolved upon—that he would not enter the house under false colours, but at once tell the Judge, without circumlocution or disguise, what was his present employment, and that he had nothing to look to for the future

but his own exertions. Then, if his visits were still invited, he might hope, in time, when he acquired a better position, to attain the consummation of his wishes.

The door was opened by a negro, who led him through a suite of rooms, all furnished in the same unpretending manner—for the Judge was a rigid republican—to an apartment overlooking the garden, where he found both Clara and her father.

We have said the Judge was a republican ; and, in fact, with him the democratic sentiment was a passion, though only so far as it referred to his own country. In propagandism he felt no interest, but rather prided himself, as he affirmed, that the constitution of America stood alone, and was thus the envy and admiration of the world. One of the articles of his faith was universal equality, and, to a certain extent, he really believed in it. He would have liked to have stood uncovered in the presence of a king, and to have said, "I am a citizen of the United States." The only superiority he professed to acknowledge was merit, though it must be confessed, his eye recognised it more readily when it chinked. But the sordid element in his character was now almost overruled by the influence of his daughter, in whom he had reared such a maiden as, in his mobilized imagination, he conceived had, at one golden period, adorned every household in ancient Rome. With joy he discovered, on her return from England, that she had come back to her American home only more wedded to the sentiments he had made the creed of her childhood—with a proud contempt for monarchical institutions, and a devotion to those of her country. And in her these opinions were not set words, but real convictions—views to be carried out, and acted up to, adopted with all the enthusiasm of her sex, and made the ruling principle of her life.

Ernest was received with so much kindness and cordiality, both by Clara and her father, that he knew not how to make his intended announcement, and it was not till, on his rising to depart, the Judge begged they might see him frequently, that he forced himself to approach the subject.

"I ought to tell you," he then said, a little embarrassed, "that I have come to America to seek my fortune, and, as I have yet to make my way in the world, this, perhaps, will prevent my availing myself of your kind invitation as I would wish."

The form of the Judge's visage changed at these words. "Oh, pray don't let us interfere with your arrangements, on any account," he said.

In a moment all Ernest's hesitation was gone, and he stood in the proud consciousness of his own probity, indifferent to the coldness of the rich man, who, after seeking his acquaintance, now thought his humbler fortune a bar to further intercourse. In truth, republicans measure worth by much the same standard as we royalists.

But a gentler voice quickly soothed his wounded feelings.

"No, we will not interfere with your avocations," said Clara, "but I daresay you're not much engaged in the evening. You must promise, till you are better known in New York, to give us as much of your leisure as you can spare."

"You won't think I have much leisure when you hear I am engaged as an auction clerk," replied Ernest, "nor will you, sir, have much opinion of my position."

The Judge looked straight before him.

"Papa doesn't understand you," said Clara, with a smile. "In his eyes every one stands in the same posi-

tion, and under the same obligation—which is, to do his duty to his neighbour and the State.”

“Every person,” said the Judge, waking up at this reference, and proceeding to lay down the law, “is bound, when called upon, to render what assistance he can to the State, either by personal service or by aids of money. According to the constitution of this country, all males between the ages of fourteen and sixty are liable to serve in the militia, and may be required to appear in arms for training and exercise at the appointed rendezvous; also, may be sent to any part of the State, and by an act of Congress, may even be despatched into any State of the Union, in the event of invasion or threatened attack by an enemy. In such emergencies, women and children, too, may be required to devote themselves to the public service, according to their ability. It is the glory of our republic and our laws that every one owes the Union the same affection, and man, woman, and child must equally labour for the common weal.”

“Nor do we recognise any differences of rank,” said Clara, her eye kindling with triumph at her father’s exposition, “rank is an exotic that does not flourish in our soil. Here we are all equal.”

“Equal!” cried the Judge, “who can gainsay it? Who will dare to impugn the first truth of nature and religion? Place me before the proudest monarch in the world, surround him with all the pomp and circumstance of power, and leave me penniless and friendless: and there, in the presence of his Court, in the face of all his splendour and might, I will proclaim myself his equal—yes, his equal, made by the same God, of the same flesh and blood, with the same impulses, feelings, and passions. Is he my superior because accident, not his own merit and exertions,

has loaded him with those gifts of fortune?—rather I am superior, who do not owe fortune such favours, who have to do my duty in life without such encouragements, assailed by temptations which he can never feel! You admire his inherited magnificence, his borrowed plumes: I, if I am virtuous and honest, claim admiration for my poverty, my destitution! Equality! Is it because you have riches, and I none, that I am not your equal? No, I despise your riches! They are dross, dirt: you have sold yourself to them, and are not the less a slave, because your chain is gold. I, on the contrary, have preserved the independence of my mind, and am prouder of my rags than you can be of your velvet.”

Clara clung to the speaker’s arm, and looked admiringly up at him.

“Equality is the first principle of our constitution,” pursued the Judge, more excited by his daughter’s approbation, “our surest bond of union. Do away with equality, and the framework of our society falls in pieces. Without it we cannot live, we cannot breathe. No, we are all equals, we are all brothers.” And he seized Ernest by both his hands, and wrung them affectionately, as he added, “brothers, brothers!”

“You are too kind,” said Ernest, really moved by his phrenzy, and at a loss how to reply.

“Let us see you soon,” said Clara, as they shook hands.

“But pray don’t trouble if it’s out of your way,” cried the Judge, his dream of equality fading. “No, pray mind that.”

“We shall never expect you in the daytime,” said Clara; “evening is far pleasanter to us, and papa does not forget that my presence here is owing to your care.”

The Judge seemed suddenly to recollect the fact. “No,” he said, “I can never forget that. Come often—often;”

and, with another cordial shake of the hand, he permitted Ernest to depart.

But it was not the Judge's kindness that sent a thrill through his frame, and made him tread the street with the step of a giant. He still felt the gentle touch of Clara's hand ; he still felt—ay, *felt*, with all his strength and life, the glance she had turned upon him when he avowed his humble station—a glance which he knew no riches could have purchased, and which was more precious to him than all the gems of Golconda. In that look he read her perception of his motives, her approval of his conduct. Did she, at the same time, discern his feelings towards herself, and comprehend her ascendancy over him? He flattered himself she could not be blind to the preference she had inspired.

Such was the slender anchor of his hopes—hopes freighted with his happiness and peace. He clung to a thread, which, if it snapped, would drop him into an abyss. His eyes wandered joyously over the radiant sky, while a gulf, unseen and undreamt of, yawned at his feet. Like the opium-eater, he indulged in ecstatic visions of bliss, unconscious that the glow which kindled his imagination was sapping the springs of his life.

He was now a frequent visitor at the Judge's mansion, and from being constantly in the society of Clara, daily became—not more enamoured, for that was impossible—but more infatuated. Love coloured all his thoughts—it possessed him. He lived in the intoxication of Clara's presence ; and when, day or night, was she not present? When did she not occupy his mind and light up his dreams?

Nor, to say truth, did Clara seem insensible of his devotion, or even unmoved by it. He had brought her to expect his appearance and his homage ; and number-

less little indications—the bright smile, the beaming eye, the happy and confiding look—showed that she regarded them with pleasure. And how she would fascinate him with the ardour of her spirit and her noble aspirations—with her sublime love of liberty and Utopian notions of republicanism, only too exalted, alas ! for poor human nature to realise ! And he listened like one entranced—as if the music which so enraptured and inspired him were in her sentiments, and not in her voice.

But there was one shadow in all this sunshine, one drop of gall, as when is there not, in the cup of happiness ? Whenever Ernest appeared, Alfred Wilmore was at his side, like a phantom—like a ghost—yes, like a ghost ! pale, sorrowful, heart-stricken, with hate in his look and desperation in his breast. In the midst of her triumph Clara would be infected by the influence of his presence ; the eye too often engrossed by another, a stranger and an alien, would then turn upon him, the loved companion of childhood, with a gentle, affectionate, pitying glance ; the accents swelling with joy, became subdued and faltering ; and the heroine disappeared in the woman.

They were all at the romantic period of life, when our impressions, yet fresh and uncorrupted, are the most indelible, and our feelings the strongest. The girl, ripening into womanhood, pure, amiable, beautiful ; wilful, but not capricious ; generous, loving, but with an unseen current of resolution and passion flowing in the depths of her bosom. The two young men, full of ardour and promise, endowed with every manly attribute, staking their all on a cast of the dice, which, like the game played with the demon, would seal the loser's perdition.

It was an autumn evening ; the mellowed light, just revealing the first tinge of shade, streamed in at the open

window, bringing the fresh, balmy air on its wings ; and Clara, though a book was in her hand, was sitting with an abstracted look, when Ernest was announced, and, as usual, was followed immediately by Wilmore. The latter, though he affected a careless air, was even paler than usual, and a close observer might have detected an uneasiness and constraint in his manner, indicative of suppressed agitation.

Having paid their respects to the Judge, who was too much absorbed by a debate in Congress to lay down his newspaper, the visitors devoted themselves to Clara.

"I have seen to-day one of the strangest sights of your city," said Ernest, as he drew a chair near her ; "a public meeting, with women figuring as the orators."

"Mr. Glynn thinks women have no vocation but knitting," said Wilmore ; "and would even deny them the use of their tongues."

"I could never dream of such cruelty," observed Ernest, good-temperedly.

"That would be making you a tyrant indeed," said Clara, laughing.

"Mr. Glynn has been brought up under tyrants," returned Wilmore, "and has become enamoured with the system, or how could he be an advocate for kings and queens, and such obsolete absurdities, in an age like the present. Englishmen may prize their own old-fashioned customs, but I think they have no right to come here to laugh at us."

"We have too much glass about our own country to throw stones at you," rejoined Ernest. "But the practice I have alluded to is not one of your institutions, and I believe many Americans object to women speaking at public meetings."

"They have just as much right to speak as men, if

they have anything to complain of," retorted Wilmore. "Would you have them resign themselves to be hewers of wood and drawers of water?"

"Certainly not, but I presume the American people have nothing of the kind in contemplation."

"I hope not," said Clara, archly, "or I shall be almost inclined to run back to England."

"Mr. Glynn must be fully aware I did not make this observation in reference to any feeling among the American people," pursued Wilmore. "In America we know what belongs to every class and interest, and, above all, we cherish an honest devotion to woman. And this is a feeling which we allow no one to impeach, or to trifle with." And he darted a furtive look of defiance at Ernest.

"You are quite wandering from the question, Alfred," said Clara, laying her hand on his arm, "which refers solely to the indignation meeting this morning. Mr. Glynn casts no imputation on our national gallantry, but, on the contrary, expresses the greatest confidence in it."

"So much so, that I contend there was no ground for such an assemblage," said Ernest.

"And I contend there was every ground for it, if the persons composing it thought so," returned Wilmore, rudely.

"But the point really at issue is the right of women to hold public meetings," said Clara. "Now, if you are our champion, Alfred, pray make out as good a case for us as you can."

"Your case is already established by nature, which gives every human being a voice to denounce wrong, and to assert right. It is only Mr. Glynn who says woman should suffer in silence."

"I merely object to her demanding redress from the platform, because it is done at the expense of her dignity and her delicacy," said Ernest. "It converts her into a mountebank ; and the familiar tones of her voice, which give such harmony to domestic life, become a public discord. Woman is too sensitive a being to be turned into a gazing-stock. Eastern nations cover her with a veil, so that no man shall see her face ; and, among us, she adopts one herself, the veil of modesty. She can never appear on a public platform till she casts that aside."

"By your account she is to express no interest in any public question—to have no political principles," cried Wilmore. "This is king-craft with a witness ! You must mind what you say on these matters, Clara, when Mr. Glynn is present."

"I believe Miss Meredith is assured I always listen to her observations with equal respect and pleasure," said Ernest, with a resentful look.

"No one can dispute either your politeness or your gallantry," replied Clara ; "and though it may seem rather ungrateful to Alfred, after he has pleaded our cause so well, I must say I partly share your opinions on this question. I think it must be admitted our sphere is the domestic circle. There our chief influence lies, and it is there we have our public mission—a mission to incite the men of our family to discharge their duty as citizens, and devote themselves to the advancement of their country—to keep alive in their breasts the love of liberty, justice, and probity, and offer, in our own actions, a perpetual protest against all that is sordid and base. So far, woman owes a duty to the Commonwealth, and this she should never omit to fulfil."

"I imagined you claimed a more prominent part," said

Wilmore, rather crest-fallen, "as you, with your grasp of mind and purpose, might well do."

"You are learning to be a courtier, Alfred," replied Clara, with a smile, "not but what there are seasons when a woman may with propriety interfere more actively in public affairs, as in case of invasion, or in presence of a national calamity. Thus Joan d'Arc became the deliverer of France ; the Maid of Saragossa fired the guns which defended her native city ; and Charlotte Corday, though young, beautiful, and amiable as an angel, dyed her hands in the blood of Marat, to rid her country of a monster."

"And you would do as she did, if your country demanded it!" exclaimed the republican, "would you not?"

"Yes," answered Clara, resolutely, though the colour forsook her cheek.

She turned abruptly to Ernest, saying in a low voice, "Shall we have some music?"

And they walked over to her harp, followed with flashing eyes by Wilmore.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE COMPACT.

"You have never been at my house," said Wilmore, thrusting his arm through Ernest's, as they quitted the Judge's mansion: "you must come home with me to-night."

"With pleasure," was the reply.

It was now dark, but the streets, as the coolest place, were still pretty thronged, and carriages were rattling about in every direction. The two young men walked along at a leisurely pace, Wilmore talking as they proceeded, in a strain which his companion thought rather incoherent, but, seeing he was much excited, Ernest, to avoid occasion for contradiction, made only monosyllable replies. At length, they arrived at a handsome detached house, and were admitted by an Irish handmaid, the usual portress in New York, and conducted to a sitting-room, which, by its style of arrangement and decoration, was easily recognised as the apartment of an opulent bachelor.

"Sit down," said Wilmore, as soon as they were alone, "I have something to say which claims your serious attention."

"Indeed," replied Ernest, "I am impatient to hear what it is."

"You are a foreigner, are you not?" said Wilmore, as they took their seats.

"You know I am an Englishman."

"You are my friend?"

"If you will allow me to say so."

You came to this country in search of a livelihood, and it has given you one?"

"Well."

"Well, you, a foreigner, coming to my country for subsistence, and obtaining it, coming to it friendless, and finding in me a friend, have done me the greatest wrong which one man can do another."

"I can't permit you to use this language to me," said Ernest, rising, while the colour mounted to his temples.

"In what have I wronged you?"

"I will tell you, tell you calmly, though you look at

me as if I were mad. I am sane enough—collected enough. You English, cast out by your own beggared country, which can't even give you bread, think no one equal to yourselves, but let me assure you I am prouder to be an American—ay, and a republican ; and I think myself in every respect your superior."

"It is useless to continue this altercation," said Ernest, with dignity. "I neither proclaim myself your superior nor admit you to be mine. I have done you no injury, nor wish to do you any. As for your reflections on my country, I scorn and condemn them. Her own children she may, as you say, cast out, but she is ever ready to give a home to foreigners, and to none more readily than your own countrymen." And he moved towards the door.

"You don't leave me thus," exclaimed Wilmore, planting himself in the way. "I have not yet denounced your ingratitude and treachery. You may toss up your head, and fume as you please, but this room you shan't leave till I have done."

"Go on, sir," said Ernest. "You have claims on my forbearance, which you know how to abuse."

"You have not injured me, no !" cried Wilmore. "I was a child ; I loved a being from whom I was never separated—who, even then, was dearer to me than life. With her I grew up ; in her beauty, in her noble mind, in her great sentiments I saw combined all that I prized, cherished, and adored. She went away—went to your polluted country, and left me in despair. I feel now the kisses she pressed on my lips at parting—the tears she shed on my cheek. What I suffered in her absence ! How I thought, miserable libeller as I was, that she might be tempted to forget her unpretending home—be deluded by the pomp and wealth of courtiers and

aristocrats. How I pictured her beauty ripening with her years, and drawing around her a host of heartless boobies, whose test of merit was a sounding title. But such vanities could not ensnare her ! she left America a child, and came back an angel."

"And you love her?" said Ernest, his resentment giving way to another emotion.

"Love her !—love ! that is a feeble term for my passion. I adore her, I worship her. And till you came she loved me, and would love me still if you were away. But you have stepped between us—you, do you hear? You ask how you have wronged me ! Is not this a wrong? Was there no one in the world but my promised bride to attract you ?—no heart but mine to trample upon ?"

"Do you say she was promised to you ?"

"Yes, promised to me—promised from childhood."

"By herself?"

"By those who acted for her—by her father and mine."

"But she was no party to the engagement !"

"If she was not, she shall be, and you, too, shall acknowledge it, or here one of us shall resign her and life together." He snatched a case from the table, and drew forth a brace of pistols. "Take your place and weapon, if you are a man," he cried, with frantic vehemence, pushing one of the pistols towards him—"An arm's length is sufficient between such enemies as we are, and, as you have blasted my happiness, you are welcome to take my life."

"I am not an assassin," said Ernest, restraining his rising anger.

"You are worse."

"Ha !"

"You are a coward."

In a moment the pistol was wrenched from his hand, and flung through the open window into the garden.

"A coward! a coward!" cried the American, half raising his hand. But he did not strike. There was something in the attitude of Ernest, in the strong athletic frame heaving with indignation and resentment, yet restrained by a nobler impulse, that held back his arm, though the blow glared from his eye.

"I will prove to you I am no coward," said Ernest, in accents quivering with repressed feeling; "I will prove to you I am a man of honour, and, by treating you with forbearance and pity, prove too, my love for your cousin is greater than yours. You say I have stepped between you—that if I were away, your suit would succeed. I will give you this advantage. Continue your visits to Miss Meredith, and I will absent myself for a stipulated time. Fix its duration yourself."

"Do you mean," said Wilmore, his whole aspect altering, "you will go away at once without taking leave, and hold no communication with her till you return?"

"That is what I mean."

"This is generous, noble."

"Spare your praise, and say what time I may be absent."

"Would it could be for ever!" exclaimed the American, passionately. "But since it cannot be—since you, too, love her, I will ask only six months."

"Six months be it, then," said Ernest.

And before Wilmore could reply, he was gone.

CHAPTER XXV.

CAMPING OUT.

It is a mad world, my masters—and a bad. But now and then, man's heart gives a flash of honest feeling, just as a flint strikes fire. It is an oasis in the desert of our baseness ; a refreshing draught on our long and wearisome journey.

Who could imagine Ernest's misery, as he lay on his sleepless pillow. With the light of love streaming upon him, rejoicing in the promise of a radiant future, he had, in one moment, been plunged into the dark seclusion of his own thoughts. And how often does it prove so ! Truly, in the midst of life we are in death : when prosperity seems most secure, we are verging on our fall.

But there is one thing that will sustain us in this uncertainty—the conviction of a future, the conviction that, be our troubles what they may, life is but a span, and is bearing us on to the repose of eternity. Hereon hang all the law and the prophets, with all our poor human excellences of generosity, truthfulness, self-denial, honour. What is the momentary glow of success, achieved by evil or sordid means ? The deadened conscience, the callous mind, may indeed be deaf, like the adder that stoppeth her ears, to the small still voice within ; but which of us, by our scheming or finessing, can add one hour to our term of life ? Let us remember then, in the moment of trial, that to sacrifice our feelings to a sense of rectitude, is, in truth, to lay up soothing thoughts for the

dreary time of sickness and age, while a contrary course may procure a transient and feeble triumph, but will ultimately entail bitter self-reproach in this world—and who can say what in the dread beyond?

But the glorious rays of morning are falling on Ernest's bed, and he is awake and stirring. The bright sunshine, indeed, can bring no gladness to his heart, but peace he can seek from another source, where it is never sought in vain. And, in the open Volume before him, he reads the words which enjoin the course he has taken, "DO UNTO THY NEIGHBOUR AS THOU WOULDST HE SHOULD DO UNTO YOU."

The night, though sleepless, has not been lost. On his restless pillow he has sketched out a plan of action, by which he may secure a livelihood at a distance from painful associations. To-day he will leave New York, and start for the West, where a projected railway, of which he heard but yesterday, promises a field of employment more congenial to his tastes than the ledger of the auction-mart. Soon he is on his way to Bowery, where he announces his intention to Mr. Selim Driver, who, having given him little more than lavish professions hitherto, offers to double his salary if he will retain his office—so ready are employers to mete the full measure, when, by such means only, they can return abundantly into their bosoms—so ready to defraud the labourer of his hire, when they can do so with impunity. Thus you, most potent, grave, and reverend signor, have put money in your purse, while the Angel of Judgment has put tears into his bottle!

Ernest left the mart but a few dollars richer than he had first entered it. But this, in his present mood, gave him little concern, and the foolish, simple fellow, actually felt sorrow at parting with Selim, who, under a mask of good-nature, had taken advantage of his trustfulness and

necessities, to cheat him of his rightful meed. From such thoughts he was awakened, ere he had gone many steps, by a shout of triumph, accompanied by a hearty slap on the back.

"Blouser!" he cried, seizing his assailant's hand. "Is it possible?"

Blouser, indeed, it was, buttoned up, as usual, in his pea-jacket, though the heat was torrid.

"All serene," he answered, with an iron grasp.

"By dad, it is, your honour," cried Pat Riley, appearing from behind, expanded from ear to ear. "It's been rough enough coming over, but now we've got ashore, faix, the weather's as s'rene as christial, so it is!"

"Why, Pat, you here too!" said Ernest, shaking the honest hand of the Irishman. "But where's your can?"

"Arrah, then, your honour minds the old times. Sure, a can 'ud be no use in this counthry at all, at all, for it isn't beer 'ud satisfy the 'merrikees, small blame to 'em. Mr. Blouser, sir, it's yourself knows is the liquor good here."

"Stunnin'," replied Blouser.

"You still keep the pledge yourself, then, Pat," said Ernest, good-humouredly.

"What 'ud be ailin' me, your honour? Sure it's the finest thing for the stomach entirely, though, to spake truth, I do take a little, now and again, as medicine—just as medicine d'ye mind."

"Just on the old plan?"

"Och, no! I'm off the beer entirely, your honour, and if I take anythin', it's just the laste taste in life of sherry shoemaker—cobbler, they call it here, good luck to 'em, but, be dad, it's liquor for their betters, every drop of it, so it is!"

"Don't you wish?" said Blouser. And thrusting his arm through Ernest's, he gave a whistle like a railway-engine, and they all walked off together.

Ernest now learnt, to his surprise and satisfaction, that Blouser was engaged on the very railway to which he proposed to offer his own services, and, in fact, was to set out the next day from New York, to lay down a portion of the levels. He was overjoyed to hear of Ernest's wish to engage in the undertaking, and proposed that they should go at once to the office of the Company, where he would introduce him to the agent. Such a proposition, removing all obstacles, left nothing to be desired, and, engineering talent being in great request at the moment, the agent, on Blouser's recommendation, eagerly secured his services, and it was arranged that he should accompany Blouser to the West, and assist him in fixing the levels.

It was a long journey, but a thousand miles, with swamps, forests, and inland seas in the way, are nothing in the western world; and at daybreak they were on board the steamer—a huge locomotive Babel, as densely packed with life as the black-hole at Calcutta, or a cellar on Saffron Hill, and, at length, after bell upon bell had rung, the monster paddles struck out, and bore them away.

Away, between verdant slopes, dotted with villas and graceful woods—beneath impending crags and massive boulders, round the bluff cape and iron coast, again between banks, wide, wide apart, bristling with hoary forest, and stretching off in black and dismal swamp! Ernest could almost imagine himself translated to the pre-Adamite world—so different were the scenes around, in all their outlines and features, from those of his previous experience. Here rose the towering sea-cliff, blackened

with the history of millions of years ; there the granite coast, thrown up by an earthquake, with the brand of its foundry, the awful volcano, still fresh on its face. Now it was the dark, gloomy savanna, where the Megalosaur, a hundred thousand ages ago, drew its body of seventy feet through the ooze—where the Cetiosaurus waded sluggishly along the shore, or gave battle to the timid whale—where, stranger than all, the Pterodactyl, the dragon of the air, hovered above, scourge alike of fish, beast, and bird. Or it was the eternal forest, the matted primeval trees, with their giant arms twined into each other, as if, in their united strength, they defied the puny enmity of man. Or it was the colossal river, recalling the wondrous streams of ancient time, when England was the bed of a gulf, and France lay in the womb of an estuary.

What a spectacle ! all this would change—*was changing*. The forest, which had mocked the storms of centuries, was disappearing before the lumberer's axe ; the frightful morass would one day be a garden ; the blackened sea-cliff, now lashed by the billows, would, in a few thousand years, look down on a smiling valley, basking at its feet ; the gaunt staring rocks would be mantled with vegetation ; the ocean river would be choked up. How could Ernest look on these things, and think on his own tiny, fleeting, miserable griefs ? What was he, poor helpless worm ! in the mighty presence of nature, and her God ? Where would his thoughts be when the everlasting rocks had perished ?

Here and there a few houses rose up, as if they had lost themselves in the woods, though little open spaces, clearings as they are called, were spread around them ; then there were orchards and fields, a windmill or a sawmill ; then signs of bustle and traffic, afloat and ashore, succeeded

by a fair city, exulting in its youthful energy and success. Again, they are in the trackless solitude, to which the river, like a vital artery, is carrying a stream of life, nutriment, and vigour. Occasionally the steamer stops—now to pour forth its hundred at a city, and take up a fresh company—now to leave a few families at a village, or to drop a solitary passenger at a station. And now a little cleared space among the trees, with a log-hut pitched on the bank of a creek—branch they call it here—marks the spot where Ernest and his companions are to land.

One might think they had reached the end of the world ; but this dreary spot, far as it seems from culture and redemption, is in America, and, of course, it is close to a railway. At the first shriek of the engine, Blouser, to whom it is the nightingale's note, gives a responsive whistle, and in a moment they have taken their places and are off.

The line, traversing such an extent of country, was necessarily a rough and ready structure, but it answered the purpose intended, affording remote territories an easy means of inter-communication. There was no need to take immense sweeps, like our own railways, to link together a few ready-made cities, and it went straight to its mark, leaving cities to grow up round its stations. Wherever it penetrated, it was the pioneer of improvement, and brought civilization, traffic, population, and industry in its train.

At length our travellers arrived where even Americans had not yet found encouragement for a railway, and now they pursued their journey on a road of planks, which threw a bridge, as it were, over the virgin soil. On such a platform, a springless waggon, hired at a neighbouring farm-house, where they passed a night, was the only prac-

ticable conveyance ; but they laughed at jolts which very sturdy travellers would have deemed no ordinary trial. From want of drainage, the road was in some places a perfect sluice ; and often the planks were cut away, or sunk beneath the horses' hoofs, like traps, sending up a shower of mud, and almost pitching the vehicle over. Then they would come to a branch, with the water up to the middle of the wheels, and the horses floundered and splashed, as if they would never get across ; or at a wider stream, a ferry, taking first the horses, and then the waggon, bore them to the opposite bank, where the causeway of timber again presented itself, and grew worse as they proceeded.

But now even the plank-road is ended, and a track through the interminable wood, indicated by notches on the trees, is the only way remaining. Here no vehicle can penetrate, but a horse led by Riley, brings on the necessary portions of their luggage, and the two friends walk along together. Nothing opposes their progress but myriads of flies ; and, of all the creatures of the forest, they see only, at rare intervals, a solitary and bewildered squirrel, which flies at their approach. Frequently they sink to the knee in withered leaves ; and, more than once, the track is intercepted by a babbling brook, which they have to cross with bare feet. But the scene is full of interest, and at another time, the strange trees, the undergrowth and creepers, and even the weeds, would not have been passed lightly by Ernest, but now his mind was pre-occupied, and the sylvan quietude only deepened his gloom. And night is coming on. The growing shadows, which follow closely on sunset, are thickening round them ; the notches on the trees become imperceptible ; and necessity and their own feelings alike command a halt.

They had arrived at one of those occasional gaps in the forest, for the existence of which it is impossible to account. Around rose the giant trees, dense and towering, like a cloud-capped barrier, and in the midst was the prairie, here smooth as a lawn, there covered with rank grass, higher than a horse's head. It was like emerging from a prison to come from the dismal wood into the freedom of this area.

Here they were to camp, and each proceeded, with eager readiness, to take a part in the arrangements for the night. The first thing was to unload the horse, and turn the spoils, abundantly provided for such an occasion, to prompt account, when a good fire was soon blazing, and a pannikin of warm tea, flavoured rather strongly with what Pat Riley called "turps," which strongly impregnated both the fuel and water, cheered and refreshed them. Nor did they lack a substantial supper, neatly dressed by their combined talents, though so many cooks, if there is any truth in the old adage, might have been expected to produce a different result. The insidious but soothing weed concluded their regale.

"We shall have many such nights as this, I suppose," said Ernest to Blouser, knocking the ashes from his dhudeen; "and many such days. But it will do for a change."

"Rayther," replied Blouser, in a lethargic state.

"I could dispense with the bats, though," observed Ernest.

"Don't mention it," answered Blouser.

"And the owls."

"Pretty well, I thank you," said Blouser, giving the danger signal.

"Arrah, be aisy wid you, Mr. Blouser, sir," said Riley,

with his merry laugh. "Sure, it's time your honour was tied up for slape, instead of whistlin' like a hingin'."

"What, do you tie Mr. Blouser up, Pat?" asked Ernest.

"Faix, I do, sir, for he's the biggest slape-walker 'twixt this and Tipperary, and, by the same token, I must buckle him on to myself to-night, so if he's after strayin' in the wood, he'll give me the laste shake in life before he laves."

"Go ahead," said Blouser.

One of his legs, accordingly, was tied to one of Riley's, and the other secured to a tree, so that he could not get off, if the impulse seized him, without raising an alarm; and all being now arranged, they disposed themselves for sleep.

But, Ernest, fatigued and exhausted as he was, could not close his eyes. The novelty of his situation, the excitement, the rugged companionship, the crackling fire, and the screams of the night-birds, combined, in spite of his weariness, to keep him awake, and his thoughts wandered to other scenes, and other days. Yet the calm, still night, with its benignant suggestions, soothed and consoled him. The scene, too, had associations, and even objects, which could not fail to attract and engage his attention. From the heart of that tangled forest, rising round him in a circle of darkness, he looked up at the countless stars, tracing them far away to the Great Nebulæ, which appeared like a fleece of light on the faded sky, or he followed a flashing meteor in its awful course, as it spanned the heavens in a breath. Then his eye swept round the prairie, as if imagination again peopled it with its ancient lords, and gave them back their usurped hunting-grounds.

Such are the impressions which haunt our first night of camping out. Who can ever forget it? Who, in spite of its roughness and discomforts, would wish it effaced from the chequered page of his life?

But Ernest, worn in body and mind, fell asleep at last. It seemed that he had but just dozed off, when it was morning. He awoke shivering; the fire had gone out, and rain was falling in torrents.

"Arrah, but we'll be able to fill the kettle now, sure enough," cried Pat Riley.

"Here we go a-gipseying," said Blouser, who had got loose, and was shaking a shower-bath from his blanket. "How are you off for soap!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE UNKNOWN TONGUE.

BEFORE another day closed, Ernest and Blouser had reached their destination, and the next morning commenced work. In an old country their task, if properly set about, would have been easy enough; but in the wilderness, it was a different affair, and was attended with no little difficulty and toil. But they were not of a disposition to be daunted by obstacles, and, at length, they covered the whole of their tract, completing the levels to the frontier of Illinois.

Here they came in contact with the great American heresy, which was now agitating the West. The Mormons, on their first migration to this part of the Union,

had settled in Missouri, but after much contention and bloodshed, had been expelled from that State, and taken refuge in Illinois. A beautiful plain on the banks of the Mississippi, abounding in every product of nature, had seemed like a new Canaan to the miserable wanderers, as they traversed the wide, pathless solitudes in search of a resting-place. It was instantly hailed as the spot at which the Saints were to await the coming of the Messiah; and a special revelation to Joe Smith confirmed the general impression, giving directions for the construction of the settlement. A hill sloping back from the river, with a gem-like islet in its front, was designated as the site of a city, and the surrounding lands were divided among the faithful, in lots proportioned to their resources. Instructions were given for laying out the city, which, among other buildings, was to contain a temple, a second Mecca, to be regarded as the centre of worship and holiness, as well as a large boarding-house, for the accommodation of strangers, and at which Joe Smith was to be permanently boarded and lodged at the expense of the community. A body-guard was also ordered to be raised for Joe, who was appointed mayor of the city, and president of the whole settlement, at the same time that he was invested with the command of the army; and being previously high-priest and prophet, the supreme authority, spiritual and temporal, was thus consolidated in his person.

The city rose like magic, as if the Divine hand had indeed given an impulse to the builders, but, in fact, it was but the impulse of fanaticism. In the centre stood the temple, a superb structure, though not transcending in magnificence that of Solomon, as the Mormons arrogantly boasted. Ten thousand souls formed the population of the city, which received the name of Nauvoo, or

Beautiful ; and twenty thousand agriculturists located on the plain. The community now numbers nearly half a million, and forms, in a new territory, one of the confederated States of the Union.

The arch-impostor who originated the delusion, was a native of the State of New York, of obscure extraction, and possessing few of the endowments usually associated with the commission of a prophet. His character, indeed, like his success, is an enigma, and, as well as his capacity, was marked by some singular contradictions. Choosing Mahomet for his model, his institution is, after all, but a Brummagem production, transparent to the most casual observer. It is possible that the Arabian seer may have brought himself to believe in his own credentials, inasmuch as he sought to supersede idolatry by the worship of the one true God ; but no such plea can be urged in behalf of Joe Smith, whose great object was the exaltation of himself. What he has taught, he taught knowingly, wilfully, and deliberately, with a full knowledge that he was a charlatan and a knave. The one motive apparent from the beginning of his career, is self-aggrandizement, gain, care for his own safety, his own ease, comfort, and enjoyment. His success probably surprised no one so much as himself, and though he was not made for such a position, yet, by drawing out his innate energy and will, the position, to a certain extent, rendered him equal to its requirements. This showed force, not grasp of mind, though he was not wanting in a certain Yankee shrewdness and cunning, almost amounting to subtlety. His language was homely, but clear and forcible, and now and then, characterised by a certain quaintness, which had a very telling effect. He would strike down an enemy with a sarcasm, more effectually than could be done by a blow ; and blows, in truth (though he laid claim to success as a

pugilist), were not his favourite resource. He seems to have wished for pre-eminence in every vocation, and aspired to be at once a general, a publican, a prize-fighter, a law-giver, and a prophet. At times, too, like Cromwell, he could descend to be a buffoon ; and, like Nero, played the fiddle—not indeed while Rome was burning, but while the voice of humanity was crying to Heaven against his Gomorrah.

Such was the being, whose highest notions of religion was to invest all things in a mantle of materiality—to clothe the Most High, whose glory the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, in the form, the flesh, and the PASSIONS of man ; to efface from our nature all that is pure, virtuous, and good ; and reduce the holiest things to the level of his own base, vulgar, sordid, wicked soul. To what have we sunk, when such a prophet can find disciples ; when a profligate in morals, a defaulter in trade, a blasphemer of religion, openly preaching all these horrors, can niche his unholy image in the shrine of the human heart !

The people of Illinois naturally regarded the immigration of the Mormons as an intrusion, and contemplated with abhorrence the naturalization of the heresy on their soil. Such pretensions as those of the Saints, paraded with all the arrogance of success, were not calculated to allay these feelings, but rather tended to heighten and confirm them, and the rugged backwoodsman, with passions and prejudices easily aroused, began to look upon the Mormons as personal enemies, while he knew them to be heretics and reprobates. The disciples of Joe, on the other hand, defied their enmity, and, to show how lightly they regarded it, appeared in arms to court attack. The Mormon militia, numbering about two thousand men, assembled on grand parade at Nauvoo, and were passed in

review by General Joe Smith, attended by a brilliant staff, and surrounded by his body-guard, which, assuming the name of "Danites," or "Destroying Angels," swore to maintain and enforce all his acts. Such a display created the greatest excitement throughout the State, and but one feeling of indignation against the Mormons pervaded all classes.

At this juncture a man named Higbee, a seceder from the sect, brought before the Municipal Court of Nauvoo a charge against Joe Smith, exposing the infamy and flagrant wickedness of his life, but the Aldermen, being all Mormons, and Joe himself the presiding judge, the case was, of course, immediately quashed. A Nauvoo newspaper, however, had the temerity to repeat the charge, supporting it by affidavits, and other evidence, very difficult to rebut ; but free discussion was not a thing which the prophet liked, except when it was on his own side, and, therefore, the "Expositor," as the paper was called, was ordered to be suppressed, which was not only done, but to intimidate others, the office was burnt to the ground, while the proprietors were obliged to take refuge in the neighbouring city of Carthage, where they demanded redress from the authorities of the State.

It was on the night following the riot that a party were assembled in a large room of Nauvoo Mansion, the boarding-house before mentioned, where strangers, as well as Mormons, found accommodation and entertainment. The assemblage comprised both men and women, several in evening dress (such is the dandyism of the new creed), though others wore the every-day garb of farmers, with, here and there, a little addition of finery. A quadrille was being danced, in which nearly all the company joined, and a spirited strain from a violin furnished an appropriate accompaniment.

The fiddler was the most prominent figure in the scene. Lolling, rather than sitting, in his easy chair, his long lank legs stretched out in front, his head drooping forward, he might have been thought asleep, only that his arm kept vigorously in motion, sweeping over the chords of the violin. From the posture he was in, his form seemed gigantic, though his height, when standing up, did not exceed six feet. But the observer was most attracted by his countenance, which, though the features appeared common at a first glance, was strongly marked, the eyes, if furtive, being quick and piercing, while the sharp outlines of the upper face disappeared in the full rounded jaw, indicating alike energy of character and unbridled sensuality. Although he had hardly attained the prime of life, indulgence, working out its own retribution, already told on his frame, and a paunch, with fat capon lined, was a portentous sign of growing obesity. But the most remarkable thing was to see such a man, dressed in a neat suit of black, with his throat encased in a spotless white neckerchief, and presenting all the appearance of a sleek, well-conditioned Puritan preacher, playing the fiddle for the dancers, piping for a flock of Saints, while several grave, rubicund elders sat by, smoking and chewing, in silent approval of the festivity. The fiddler was the captain and chief of the whole—Joe Smith.

“This is a merry scene,” said one of the elders, who, though older and stouter, bore a strong resemblance to Joe, and was, in fact, his brother Hiram. “Yea, a merry scene,” he repeated, in a snuffling voice, as the dance concluded, “and now it is manifest that we have our portion in a good land, and live a life of content. Moreover, our enemies have turned their backs upon us.”

“Who talks of enemies?” cried Joe. “If there’s any enemy of mine here, let him stand out, like a man, and I

won't ask the Saints to come between us. There's old Campbell, of Carthage ; he says he'll riddle my skin till it won't hold shucks. I wish he'd come here. I'd riddle him ; I'd claw him. Shades of Samuel and Saul, if he touch but a hair of the humblest of the chosen people, he shall not escape like the dogs of Missouri, but he shall perish like Agag. Verily, we're no longer lambs, but are full grown, and now we'll show our teeth. We've got teeth, haven't we ? ”

There was a buzz of assent, amidst which several gentlemen produced revolvers.

“ Oh ! you've got teeth, you poor lambs,” pursued Joe ; “ and what are they given to you for ? ”

“ To bite ! ” replied a loafer.

“ Brother, you've answered well,” rejoined Joe, “ and for this I make you one of the band of Danites, and your name shall be written in the sealed book. Come, let's liquor—drink of my cup, and be merry.” And he handed him a mug of water, tempered by a lavish infusion of brandy.

“ Now let's have a song,” said Sidney Rigdon—a dark, sinister-looking man, who sat next to Hiram Smith, and who was one of the apostles. “ General, sing, sing ! Harmony and concord go hand in hand, as may be read in Proverbs. Moreover, you have a gift for song. You have a voice as a turtle-dove, which makes the heart joyful. Now pour it out like a trumpet ! ”

“ What shall it be ? ” said Joe.

“ ‘ Job Jones,’ ” answered Rigdon ; and the whole company approving the choice, the song was given with great gusto by the prophet.

“ This is a first-chop song ; A 1, general,” remarked Sidney Rigdon, when the performance was finished, amidst the applause of the audience ; “ and it's capable of

a signification worthy to be noted. 'Job Jones' is like the poor deluded multitudes who drink the water of false doctrine, pouring the same into their souls to their own undoing, when they may have their fill of strong cordial in the church of the Latter-Day Saints."

"A good similitude, brother Rigdon," observed Hiram Smith. "Now I see it is profitable to take a parable out of all things."

"Wine is given to be made merry with, as is manifested in Scripture," observed Joe; "so is brandy—so rum, gin, whisky, beer, ale, mint-julep, sherry-cobbler, compounds, and all liquors, including tea, coffee, cocoa, chocolate, milk. We are coming upon times and seasons—nay, we are come upon them already, and these things should be understood. There are souls that require strong drink, and I tell you there are men in the church who can't speak that which is in them till they are out-and-out drunken, because they haven't strength of their own to contend against the wiles of Satan."

As he uttered these words, a scream from one of the fairer portion of the company, at the other end of the room, drew attention to a witch-like old woman who had mounted on a table, where she stood pointing her finger at Joe. It was Jail Bird.

"Well, old dame, where are you from?" cried the prophet, with a composure that amazed most of the assembly, who never suspected the new comer was acting under his directions. "You've got a bad arm—rheumatics, eh! You've come to the prophet to be cured. You've found me out, have you?"

Jail, in reply, made a convulsive movement with her hand, and then poured forth a torrent of her old gibberish, which passed among the faithful as the Unknown Tongue.

A general hush followed this incident, which was broken, at length, by the shrill, penetrating voice of Joe.

"Ay, Frost!" he cried. "I know him. A knave, is he?—an apostate! Verily, you are a witness to the truth, sister! He is rightly named Frost, for his heart and soul are frozen. Cæsar hated lean men, but, if there is any one I hate, it is a man without honest feeling—a man of ice, a man who sends a chill through you—such as this Frost."

"This is marvellous," cried Sidney Rigdon. "I expect the woman is one of the blest—a good soul, yea! But interpret, general, that we may all know the hidden things of her discourse."

"She is for shooting him," said Joe. "She says he is accurst, and all who have to do with him. Truly, it is a wonder! It shows what things are coming on the earth, and how the saints should rejoice. Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Solomon, Paul, listen, if you can, on your thrones, if you have any, to this woman's words, and you shall see cause to marvel."

"We must take account of her report, brother," observed Hiram. "If the man is a wrong-doer—and you know him to be such—let him be expelled the city."

There was a general murmur of approbation at these words.

"But hear the woman—hear our sister!" cried Joe, pointing at Jail, who appeared to be writhing in spiritual agony, but now gave utterance to another outburst, with the same effect as before.

"She asks for John Clinton," cried Joe. "Truly there is such a man—and a good man—a saint and brother. Stand out, brother Clinton, and you shall have honour among the brethren. Ha!" he continued, as the farmer,

looking more obtuse and stolid than ever, stepped forth from the background. "Now I see an honest man. This is a sort of man who would be tarred and feathered in Missouri, as I was, when that Judas, Simmonds Rider, sold me to the mobbers, at Father Johnson's, in Jackson county. What it is to live in a free State, in this great Union ! But our fathers fought for independence, and so will we. That Simmonds Rider, mark ye, took sick and died. He said that night, 'I'll gee you, 'tarnal roarin', Joe Smith.' Oh ! but who geed him ? Who fixed him, eh ?"

"I reckon he is fixed for everlastin'," said Sidney Rigdon, while laughter and acclamations broke from the company.

"But what says our sister, brother ?" said Hiram. "I think she would have you away. See, she beckons."

"Yes, she'll have me to the temple, and brother Clinton too ; I am glad he is come to such honour, just as Saul, the son of Kish, when he sought his father's asses. Well, I rejoice in heart at it, and am comforted, because I know brother Clinton to be a man of meekness, patience, godliness, virtue, faith, truth, peace, temperance, and charity. I know you're not like that ice-bound, frozen, soul-numbing Frost, brother. Oh ! what a wintry knave is that Frost ! how he makes my fingers ache—that fellow !"

The farmer, though he listened with all his ears, made no reply to this exordium, but stood staring, first at Joe, and then at Jail Bird, in utter bewilderment and amaze. Jail seemed impatient at so much delay, and rushed with a frantic exclamation from the room, all the company falling back as she disappeared, though one or two, bolder than the others, were about to follow, when the prophet called them back.

"Stay all of you!" he cried. "But two of us are to go—brother Clinton and me; the rest remain and wonder."

"Wonder! wonder!" cried Sidney Rigdon. "Brother,"—and he slapped the gaping farmer on the back,—"*I* give you joy. This it is to be a faithful member of the Church: you will be shown a hidden thing. I wish Pelatiah Allen, Esquire, of Hiram, Jackson county, was here to-night. He gave the mobbers a barrel of whiskey to raise their spirits when they set to their manly work of tarrin' and featherin' Joseph Smith, junior, and elder Sidney Rigdon. Them were blessed feathers. General, them feathers will be our wings some day, when we fly up among the angels. But go! go!"

"Surely, I will," said Joe. "Brother Clinton, come—with a good heart and courage. Come! come!" And he drew Clinton from the room, leaving the company silent and panic-struck.

It was a dark night, but as they passed out, a man thrust a link into Smith's hand, and they saw the figure of Jail moving on before them. But as they approached the temple she disappeared, and Clinton, whose torpid faculties reeled under so much excitement, was wondering what had become of her, when he found her standing at his side.

"There! there!" she cried, as the prophet flung open the door of the temple. "The words are in the book."

"The book—it is the book of life?" exclaimed Smith, leading the trembling farmer into the building. "And see, it is here ready—read and understand?" And he threw the glare of his link on a reading-desk, supporting an open volume, in which, with protruding eyes, the farmer read these words.

"Thy daughter, Jessie Clinton, thou shalt give unto Joseph Smith, junior, in spiritual marriage, and she shall be his wife."

"You see how it is with you?" said Joe. "You will obey."

"Surely," faltered the ashy lips of the farmer.

Jail gave a scream of triumph, and dashed the link to the ground, leaving the huge building in darkness.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE STATES' MARSHAL.

THE Clintons, on leaving Glynellan, had, in company with Frost, emigrated to America, and found their way to the Mormon settlement. This, with her altered religious views, was by no means the wish of Jessie, and she opposed the project as long as she was able, but, at length, submitted to necessity. Submission, indeed, had now become a habit with her, as if, by making it her constant aim, she had trained and bent herself to it. The light thrown into her mind by Ernest, directed by another and more precious Influence, had awakened her to a sense of her benighted condition, and shown her its nakedness and deformity. She began to understand that religion was something more than words, although, at first, she could not seize its real character. But, in the repose and inaction of the voyage from England, her thoughts, inspired by the surrounding immensity—by the boundless ocean, and the ever-circling sky, had acquired a truer

perception of the Creator, and had tried to lay their burden at his feet. By such means she had learnt the beautiful restraints, the discipline of religion, and these gave her strength and fortitude to bear their yoke, though they did not yet administer consolation. The flame kindled by human passion could not indeed be extinguished, but it was tempered by one purer and brighter, which, while refining and elevating her nature, in great measure directed her sensibilities into another channel.

In such a frame of mind she had arrived at Nauvoo, and it may readily be conceived that, if she recoiled from it at a distance, Mormonism on a near approach, in its own stronghold, did not present itself in a more attractive aspect. The shocking excesses of its professors, indeed, were for a time kept out of her sight, as was usual in the case of new-comers ; but too soon the veil was thrown aside, and the mystery revealed. She now strove to open the sealed eyes of her father ; but to him the powers of darkness appeared as angels of light. Despairing, at last, of reclaiming him, perceiving that her former ascendancy over him was gone, and trembling at her own situation, she thought of seeking safety in flight, but it required little observation to discover that escape was impossible, and that, once an inmate of that house of bondage, she was chained to a rock.

Frost, who had taken some land with Clinton, and assisted him in its cultivation, was no longer importunate in his addresses to her, though at times he became ungovernable, and urged his suit with frantic violence. The character of this man was a strange anomaly, or, at least, appeared so, in connexion with his feelings towards Jessie. Even love could not transform such a Cimon in soul, as well as habit ; and a passion like his—heightedened, but at the same time envenomed by every repulse, could not

overrule the mulish bias of his nature. But, undoubtedly, it was the one thing in his black breast that, if its ultimate aim was self—if it was blind, perverse, and exacting—was yet not brutish ; and it was a marvel to see this bold, bad man, in spite of his paroxysms of fury, jealousy, and malignity, a crouching slave at the feet of a girl.

On arriving at Nauvoo, Frost, to whom all religions were alike, had thought of embracing Mormonism, as a measure which could not fail to unite him more closely to Clinton, and, in effect, to his daughter ; but Jessie's undisguised renouncement of the heresy altered his determination. His contumacy gave great offence to the Mormons, though they were ignorant of the cause, as Jessie, to avoid both dispute and contamination, never appeared abroad ; and a hundred means of annoyance were resorted to, to make his residence among them insupportable. Another circumstance occurred, which tended to render him more obnoxious. Jessie, in an unavoidable visit to the market, happened to encounter Joe Smith, and from this time he haunted her father's house, and persecuted her with his addresses. It was not likely, with despotic power in his hands, that he would allow such a rival as Frost to stand in his way, and, accordingly, he took care to heighten the bad feeling against him, while he adopted more direct measures for driving him from the city.

In a conjuncture so desperate, Jessie turned her eyes towards Frost with different feelings from what she had been accustomed. His companionship with her father, his rugged attachment to herself, long familiarity with his presence, and his detestation of the Mormons, were circumstances which, operating on a disposition subdued by disappointment, suffering, and religious meditation,

began to engage her sympathies, while they seemed to invite her confidence. She sometimes reflected whether, with so many dangers around her, it might not be better, after all, to accept his suit, and find in his house protection and a home. And then the thought arose, that, perhaps, she might be able, in the course of years, to reclaim and humanize this man, and restore in his soul the defaced image of his Maker. Such are the dreams conceived by woman, as if, by any process of manipulation, granite could be moulded like potter's clay, or base sordid lead transmuted into gold.

And, amidst her long and anxious musings, did no other emotions agitate the young girl's heart? did no memories come up from the grave of the past, like shadows, like phantoms, to haunt and distract her? Alas, yes! How could it be otherwise? The passion that, long, long ago as it seemed—so greatly had she changed since—had struck her down, like a plague, in an instant of time, still retained its consuming fire. Religion had brought her quietude, resignation, but not healing. The freshness, the charm of life was gone. And thought would be busy, in spite of her womanly scruples, with that moment of delirium, that little dream of mingled pain and transport, when all her affections had been awakened and deepened only to be completely paralyzed.

With a spirit thus wounded and broken, she awaited the crisis which seemed to be drawing around her, and which, in fact, was nearer than she supposed. At their first meeting in the morning her father informed her of his designs, in reference to Joe Smith.

"It is a good thing happened to us—a good thing," concluded the miserable fanatic; "marrow and fatness, and corn and wine."

"And do you think I will consent?" cried Jessie, her spirit kindling at the proposal.

"Consent!" echoed Clinton, with the glare of a maniac.

"Father! father! what would you do?" cried the girl. "Would you give over your own child to——. Merciful Heaven! (and she clasped her hands, in an agony of supplication), pity! pity! Spare his grey heirs—and my soul!"

"What ails o' the wench?" cried Clinton, thrusting his hands in his pockets, and regarding her with the same lurid look. "Ain't it for your soul yor'n do it?—for a queen's throne, and I'n sit an your right han'."

"Ah, dear father! What you propose would be perdition and shame. This man already has—but, more, I will not, dare not say—I can't bring my lips to utter! Yet, think, can this be religion? Look at the blameless, spotless life of Him who died on the cross! at his doctrine, his sweet and holy precepts, and ask yourself, dear, dear father, if one is like the other? Light does not differ more from darkness; and if one is true the other must be false. I take my stand by what is virtuous and good, and if that is false, let me perish in my error."

"To your own undoin'—to the undoin' of borth on us," said Clinton, stamping his foot.

But though he was more furious than she had ever seen him before, Jessie threw her arms round his neck, and looked up imploringly at his face.

"Don't say so, or think so," she exclaimed. "You are imposed upon. This wicked man has thrown his toils round you, and hemmed you in; but, believe it, he is an impostor, a man left on the earth to work evil, and delude many to their destruction. Let us fly from him.

Let us go where we can worship God in peace and truth. Come, dear, and I will never leave you, but work for you, and live and die with you !”

“ A blasphemer, an idolater !” cried the farmer, flinging her from him. “ I’n see how it be ; Satan, he’n want to stop this work, and set ’ee an’ to do it, but shairnt speed. I’n beat he, and you too—borth an ye : Amen !”

“ This is said out like a man,” cried another voice—and Joe Smith stood before them. “ But we must be gentle and tender, as well as stout-hearted, for so saith the Scripture—‘ wise as serpents and harmless as doves.’ And this maid is one of us, brother—flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. Surely I will reason with her, and, if she speak wrathfully, I will give her a soft answer and good words, so that she shall be soothed, and pacified, and comforted—only let us be alone.” And he pointed to the door.

“ Don’t go away, father ! Don’t leave me here alone with him !” supplicated Jessie. But Clinton, receiving the Prophet’s injunction as a command from Heaven, hurried out, without even looking back. Then Jessie’s terror seemed to vanish, and she stood erect and defiant, but still, motionless, as if she had been converted into stone. Yet, if all without was so placid, what a tempest of feeling was raging within !

“ This is good,” said Joe ; “ you are going to listen, and you shall hear words sweet as milk, in regard to those things which are in store for you—riches and power and might and honour.”

“ You have pawned your soul for these, and you think I will do the same,” answered Jessie, with a look of scorn. “ Wretched man ! what will all your treasures be when you require nothing but a grave ?”

"A good answer," said Joe, adroitly ; "supposing I had spoken in a carnal and worldly sense, but my meaning was spiritual. And be you like minded, that we may discourse of these things with sobriety and modesty, taking all in righteousness."

"Righteousness from you !"

"There it is !" returned Joe. "The cavils and the slanders and the libels of the world lead you astray, so that you see light as it were darkness, and black as white. What said the Jews?—'can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' so, the Prelatists, Presbyterians, Socinians, Baptists, Anabaptists, Methodists, Seceders, New and Old Connexions, with all their paraphernalia of universities, colleges, missionaries, Bible societies, and money-getting, pocket-picking, gospel-robbing tricks, say of Joseph Smith ! Who is Joe Smith ? what is he ? whence is he ? I answer ; he is a prophet : he works miracles ; he teaches the poor, he instructs the ignorant, he comforts the afflicted. You say a man is to be believed if he has two witnesses ; yet, here are twice two—and twice two are four—and you refuse belief !"

"Because your witnesses are false—like yourself and your words ! You teach sin, and you live in sin."

"The same old story again, and again, and again ! Yet I have a kindness for you, my sister, and my heart has often yearned to you, as a mother yearns to her child, because I know there is in you a secret spring of goodness, holiness, righteousness, wisdom, understanding, and virtue ; and I know, moreover, you are to be brought to honour, in spite of the stubbornness, wilfulness, and stiff-neckedness of your flesh. Yea, looking with the eye of prophecy, I see you brought out in the sight of the people, in raiment of purple and gold, and all men look on won-

dering, and say, lo ! she is fair, she is comely, she is holy ; she is meet to sit on a throne, and to be unto us as Esther, a queen, and a ruler over many."

"I listen to you too long," said Jessie, shuddering. "What you say horrifies, instead of deluding me, and I tremble to hear you speak. Oh ! if you have any pity—if you have any human feeling, relinquish this persecution. You can never—you never *shall* succeed ; for rather than submit to a fate so terrible, I would die the most cruel of deaths."

"Ha !" exclaimed Joe, fiercely. But he checked his rising anger, adding—"Die is easily said, but not so done. You still see things carnally. Wake up your spirit, look on things spiritually, and you never die, for then the spirit immortalises the flesh. This is what I will bring you to, and in that time, you shall indeed be a spirit, and my spiritual bride, in the world present, and the world to come. Not now—not now : we are interrupted."

As he spoke, the door was flung open, admitting three formidable-looking personages, one of whom coolly drew forth a revolver.

"Mr. Joseph Smith, junior, I expect ?" said this individual.

"Well," replied Joe, turning very pale.

"Well, Mr. Joseph, I'm a States' Marshal, and I've got a little bit of paper here from the Governor of Illinois, requiring me to lodge you in Carthage gaol—that's all."

"And you think I'll go," said Joe. "Oh, yes ; I'm a lamb ; but I've got teeth—a few. I've got an army now, Mr. States' Marshal. Nice States, verily—nice independent, free, States, with a glorious constitution—yea, for Methodists, Seceders, Campbellites, and all other lights, except the true lights—the church of Latter-Day-Saints on earth. And so you think I'll go with you?"

"If you don't, I'll blow your brains out," answered the Marshal, complacently.

"Ho ! ho ! help !" cried Joe, at the top of his voice.

"Hilloa, what's the matter ?" cried another voice, and a person entered from the street.

It was now Jessie who uttered an exclamation, but it was denotive as much of joy as surprise.

"Jessie ! is it possible ?" cried Ernest Glynn—for the new comer was no other. Jessie burst into tears.

"Come, Mr. Joseph, all this is nothing to us," said the States' Marshal. "Come away quietly, and you'll perhaps be safer in Carthage gaol than you will be here. You'll have fifty thousand men round this location before night. Now there's my coach at the door, and all you have to do is to step in, and go off to gaol like an independent citizen."

"But—"

"There's no but in the case. If you don't go, I'll shoot you—that's a fact. There, come along."

And seizing the arm of the paralyzed prophet, he half dragged him to the coach, and forcing him in, the vehicle proceeded at a furious pace down the street.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

THE capture of Joe Smith had been effected so expeditiously, and so adroitly, that Jessie could hardly believe in her deliverance, and even when he was gone, stood quivering with terror. Nor was her agitation diminished by the sudden appearance of Ernest, though from this, she had been animated by far different feelings.

"Come, take courage, Jessie," said Ernest, cheerily ; "you are now safe."

"I shall never be safe here," she replied, in trembling accents.

"Why not ? Isn't your father with you ?"

"My father ! He is more powerless than myself—in more peril. The dupe and tool of that impostor."

"And you are not ! What a satisfaction is that, Jessie !—to me, no less than yourself."

To *him* ! Did he, then, still care for her—still feel an interest in her ?

"To you I owe it !" she said tenderly. "It was you who first showed me his true character. You rescued my body from his deluded followers, and then taught me how to reclaim my soul." And her soul seemed to gleam from her eyes as she spoke.

But if Ernest saw in that glance what was the real nature of her feelings towards him, a voice within, small and still (but with him how potent !) repeating her sad and touching words, taught him to regard such a result as a calamity rather than a triumph, awaking no response but a pang.

"We are all in the hands of a higher Power, Jessie," he replied ; "and next to that, you have to thank your own good sense and good feeling for your deliverance. These you must still exert, if you would escape from this den."

"But my father !" cried Jessie, despairingly ; "nothing can move him, and he looks on this man as little less than a god."

"The more reason why you should not remain under his control ! You must fly—and why not at once, before the panic which Smith's apprehension will excite subsides ?"

He spoke so eagerly, and with so much earnestness and affection, that a new impression flashed on Jessie's mind. He asked her to fly at once—*at once*? then it must be with him! A film seemed to fall from her eyes, and from her heart; and she thought, in her mad frenzy, that, after all, he might love her. Duty, self-command, religion—all paled before that strong delusion, and she felt only the glow of her own mortal, treacherous, and now guilty passion.

"I am ready to go this instant," she replied, quickly her whole face lighting up as she spoke—"only tell me where."

"Anywhere out of Nauvoo you will be safe," answered Ernest. "I will escort you to New Orleans, where you can establish a home for yourself by your own industry—a home protected by the laws, which no one will dare to violate."

His purpose was now but too clear, and all Jessie's brightness vanished.

"Yes, yes, thank you, I will," she said, scarcely able to check her tears. "But now I reflect, I had better try once more to move my father, and if possible, persuade him to go too. Nor would escape be so easy as you imagine. You hear what a commotion is in the street."

Hurried steps and sounds without, indeed, indicated no ordinary disturbance, but hardly had they become sensible of the fact, when they were startled by the entry of Frost. An imprecation broke from him as he discovered Ernest.

"Have you followed us here, then?" he cried, with a murderous look. "Can't you even leave the girl quiet, when she's placed the sea between you?"

"It is you who will not leave me quiet—who madden

me," said Jessie, though more in a tone of reproach than anger. "And you think he is like yourself!"

"As far as I am concerned, he may say what he pleases," said Ernest, "but I caution him not to reflect upon you. It is only on your account I condescend to tell him my presence here is accidental—that I was ignorant of your being in Nauvoo, or in America, till I entered this room, where I was brought by a cry for help."

"Who was mellin' of her, then?" demanded Frost, with a scowl.

"No one, at that moment," answered Ernest. "The outcry was raised by the villain Smith."

"Joe Smith? Why he's nabbed—gone off to gaol."

"It was here he was apprehended," returned Ernest.

"Oh!" drawled Frost. "You know, then," he added to Jessie, "your father's took with him."

"No: you say this to terrify me," faltered Jessie.

"I'm like to do that, aint I; I tell you he's off in the same coach with him. He was took at the Mansion-House, along with Hiram. The warrant was against all three, for setting fire to the 'Expositor' office, and the mobbers swear they shall swing for it."

A mist came over Jessie's eyes, and she would have fallen, had not Ernest placed her in a chair.

"Why do you tell her this, knowing it to be false?" he said to Frost. "Don't give way, Jessie," he added; "I am, of course, ignorant how far your father is guilty, but he is under the protection of the law, and before he is punished, he must be brought to trial."

"You're only misleading her, boy; blinding her, and sending her astray, as you always have done," cried Frost. "I tell her the truth, and it is to tell the truth, and the

whole truth, I came here. Then she may judge whether she will help her father or no."

"Can I help him?" exclaimed Jessie. "Only tell me how, and if it is to lay down my life, I will do it."

"Stuff!" said Frost. "I don't want your life, and you know that well enough. You know what I want."

Jessie passed her hand before her eyes.

"*What* do you want?" said Ernest; "name it, if you can serve her, and anything reasonable you shall have. Gold, if you wish," and he drew forth his purse, "as far as my poor means will go."

"Keep your gold, my lad, till you're asked for it," said Frost, insolently. "You've got but little, I make no doubt. But you talk of old Clin being brought to trial. Why, he was brought to trial last night, and the two Smiths with him, and the judge as tried 'em is rather a queer customer. You've heard of him, I dare say—most people's heard of Judge Lynch."

Jessie uttered a cry.

"Well, Judge Lynch has condemned these men to death—old Clin being one. Now do you understand? As for what I want of this lass, that's my business, and if you'll leave us to ourselves, we'll come to a settlement, one way or t'other, in a twinklin', without your puttin' in your spoke."

"I won't interrupt your conference," said Ernest; "only remember, while I am within reach I will protect her from injury and insult, let it be offered by whom it may." And he moved towards the door.

"Stay," said Jessie. "I know what he would say—what he demands. If he will try to effect my father's release, I—I—" the words seemed to stick in her throat but she made an hysteric effort—"I consent."

"Consent?" cried Ernest. "To what?"

"To be his wife!"

"You hear her;" exclaimed Frost, clapping his hands, while an oath burst from his lips. "You are a witness—you, mind! I'll hold you to this. Yes, by ——." And another oath rang in their ears.

"Will you give yourself to this man?" said Ernest, seizing Jessie's arm, and looking reproachfully in her face.

"Not myself, but what I have to give—my hand, my life, if he will deliver my father. I will be his wife, and try to do my duty by him."

"That's enough—that's all I want," cried Frost, exultingly. "Don't say any more now. I'll be off at once, and see how I'm to set to work, and young squire here may come with me if he will. But you keep close, Jess, and to-morrow we'll have you off to New Orleans, for there'll be bloody work in Nauvoo before long." Turning abruptly to Ernest, he added, sullenly, "Will you come?"

"I must know, first, how you intend to accomplish your object," said Ernest.

"That I've got to think on," returned Frost. "I don't know all that's in the wind yet, but I'm on the Committee—we have Vigilance Committees in this independent country, and I'll soon find out. You may be of use, if you've a mind to."

"Enough," said Ernest. And taking leave of Jessie, he accompanied him from the house.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BACKWOODS.

A LIGHT cart was at the door, and Ernest jumped in, while Frost took a seat at his side, and drove off.

For the moment they maintained an appearance of companionship, if not friendship, but, in their hearts, each had a rooted mistrust of the other. Ernest could feel no confidence in one who, from all that had come to his knowledge, he believed to have wantonly injured him in time past, and the remembrance of that injury rankled in Frost's breast as if his companion had been the offender, and the wrong had been inflicted on himself. Nor was there wanting another element to fan his smouldering hatred—the unwelcome and distracting reflection, to which he could not shut his eyes, that, while promising to become his wife, Jessie, in her blind infatuation, had unsolicited given Ernest her love, and thus even his success was embittered by the triumph of his rival.

I remember, when a child, a man luring me with gentle words and caresses, to a secluded spot, almost as dreary as his own black heart.—This man was a murderer, and while he pressed the child's trusting hand—while he beguiled him with accents of love and affection, intended here to consummate his crime, his only inducement being, what in him silenced every feeling of nature, the pittance given at the dissecting-room for the lifeless body.

And now, as the road entered the forest, the demon of jealousy suggested a similar course to Frost. The words of

fellowship were on his lips, while murder was in his heart. It was as if two brothers sat side by side, and one of them was Cain. At first, indeed, Frost recoiled from the thought. But the Tempter, who knew him better than he knew himself, held it up again, and now he looked it in the face. It was true, he could never be secure while Ernest lived. Jessie might become his wife, but she would remain his rival's slave. In that case, what might not happen? what might not already be planned? Ernest's appearance, after all, might be the result of a preconcerted understanding, and the story of his encounter with Joe Smith a fabrication. No doubt of it? How could he give it a moment's credence? And here he might end all his doubts, and effectually avoid future misery. Ernest, a stranger in the country, without friends or connexions, would never be missed, and even if he were, a period of popular commotion would account for his disappearance. A single bullet was all that was required, and his body, left in the depth of the forest, would tell no tales. He might easily assign a reason for his absence to Jessie, and thus make it effective in another way, as his apparent desertion of her, at a time when she needed help, would, perhaps, at length have the effect of estranging her from him. But why did he hesitate? why let the auspicious moment slip by? He laughed, he joked, he sang out wild snatches of song, but all this time, the one burning, blighting thought was in his mind. At last, he drew forth a pistol; his hand was on the trigger; his mind was made up; and at the first favourable spot he would fire.

But, whatever sceptics may think, we are surrounded, in our way through life, by an overruling Providence, which watches alike over the strong man and the helpless,

unsuspecting child. As with the Barker in Willow Walk, so it was with Frost. He was just raising the pistol, when a rustling in the undergrowth, close to the road, though it proved to be only a buzzard, restrained his hand ; again, and the sound of horses' hoofs rang on the road behind ; again, and two men appeared in front, who, as they drew nearer, gave a shout of recognition to Ernest, and turned out to be Blouser and Pat Riley.

"Troth, it's a trate to see your honour," cried Pat, "and it's yourself, savin' your presence, me and Mr. Blouser was just lookin' after. There's a beautiful breeze gettin' up, sir, and I b'lieve the whole country's listed in the m'litia. The Mormons, bad luck to 'em, 'ull get a bellyful this time, any way."

"Such a go," said Blouser. "All round my hat, and no mistake."

"We tried to get horses to come on to you quick, sir," resumed Riley, "but be-dad, we couldn't so much as get asses, though I b'lieve they're as plenty here as in the ould country, every bit. But, by this and by that, I hope we'll have a slap at the Mormons ourselves, for I hear Father O'Sullivan say, they're as big a set of blackguards as you'd wish to mate."

"I'm afraid he's given their true character, Pat," returned Ernest, "but we've no business to take part with either side, and my advice to you is, to keep clear of them both."

"Right again," said Blouser, nodding his head.

"By the hole in my coat, if there's a skrimmage on foot, sir, I couldn't keep out of it, for the life of me," observed Pat—"speshly, if it's to bate the Mormons—the murderin vagabones."

"Then we must send you out of the way," said Ernest, "But come, Blouser, you and Pat had better jump up, and we'll go back to Carthage together."

"That's as I please," remarked Frost, sullenly, for the first time breaking silence.

"All serene, guv'nur," cried Blouser, jumping in behind, "go ahead."

"Arrah, but don't you be after fallin' down like the shay," said Pat, following his leader into the cart.

"A shay down?" cried Frost, with sudden interest.

"Reg'lar," answered Blouser. "Three beaks and three coveys spilt."

"Whereabout's, and when?" inquired Frost.

"Troth, it was just below here, at the branch, my man, and if you don't mind, you'll be after doin' the same trick yourself," said Riley. "But I b'lieve they've gone on to the public now, small blame to 'em."

Frost, without making a reply, here lashed the horse into a gallop, notwithstanding that Blouser gave the danger signal, and Pat Riley, at the top of his voice, sang out, "Tare-an-oons, be aisy wid you, or by the hocus-pocus, you'll be dancin' on your head instead of your heels before long, so you will."

The cart, indeed, on reaching the branch had a narrow escape, as it bounced into the shallow water, but righted directly, and gaining the opposite bank, Frost drew up before a wooden cabin, with a smithy adjoining, where a close chaise, which he recognised as the States' Marshal's, was undergoing repair.

"Now we've got the game in our own hands," he said to Ernest aside. "If your chums 'ull stand by you, we can bring old Clin off scot free."

"Neither they nor I will join in any such project," replied Ernest. "I will aid you to the utmost in protect-

ing this deluded man from the mob, or even in doing everything that can fairly be done to procure his release, but here my co-operation must end. I will never interfere with the course of justice, much less join in an attempt to rescue a criminal."

"And that's all you'll do, is it?" said Frost. "I would n't give much for your help, then."

With a muttered oath, he stalked into the public, while Ernest, who had alighted at the same time, followed close behind, though more to observe than act.

Four or five loafers were grouped round a table near the door, talking in an under tone to each other, and in an opposite corner sat the States' Marshal, apparently absorbed in discussing some bread and cheese, while the host and his daughter, a buxom Missouri lass, stood behind the bar, or rather counter—for the place combined the resources of a liquor-shop with those of a general store. Ernest looked round for the prisoners, but the Marshal, well knowing the popular feeling respecting them, had, as a measure of precaution, secured them in the inner room, under charge of his assistants, and only waited till the coach should be prepared to resume his journey.

The loafers looked rather suspiciously at the new comers, but a gesture from Frost as he approached the table—the secret sign of the Vigilant Committee, completely reassured them.

"He's here," said one.

"Who do you mean?" replied Frost.

"Tarnal, roarin' Joe Smith," observed another, "and I hope the buzzards 'ull eat me, if I don't riddle his skin till it won't hold shucks. I've sworn to it, airnt I, boys."

"We've all sworn," said the first speaker, "speshly Campbell."

"Now, the job is, how we're to do it," resumed Campbell. "Gov'nor Sykes has guv a pledge he'll set Nauvoo a-fire to-night, and serve it like old Jerusalem, so as one stone shan't stand on another, as for these chaps here, they're in a fix, I tell you. I've been out, and done such damage to the shay, it can't be patched up no how. But the thing is"—he looked across the room, but the Marshal, whose observation he apprehended, had just vanished through the inner door—"The thing is, as all the militia 'ull be away with the Gov'nor, shall we join the Vigilants at Carthage, and hang the tarnal nigger there, or pounce on him now, and give him a hoist in the woods. I'm for goin' at it right away—slick. Let's liquor." And after a hearty draught from his mug he handed it to Frost.

"We're all o' the same mind," said another loafer ; and his comrades assented.

"But there's three of 'em," observed Frost. "What will you do with t' other two ?"

"Hiram 'ull swing with him," answered Campbell. "I don't know third chap, but the Marshal may keep him, if he will, or he may take a jump on nothing along of Joe."

"I'd rather take him off in my cart to Carthage, and give him up to the Committee," said Frost.

"So you may, if you like," answered Campbell.

"Well, if we're goin' to do it, we'd better begin," said Frost. "But we must lay a plant, or we're like to get more kicks than cents."

"Don't fret, neighbour," returned Campbell, that's fixed, I reckon. Bob here 'ull go and tell the smith, and he'll come and say the shay's ready : then, as they're walkin' out, me and Jack 'ull come behind the Marshal and his men, and if we don't streak 'em its a pity."

"That cock won't fight, I tell you," said the Marshal, who had approached unobserved.

"Ho ! you're there, air you ?" answered Campbell.

"That's about it," was the reply.

"And what dodge air you goin' on now ?"

"What do you think ?"

"Not knowin', can't say," growled Campbell.

"Well, while you've been laying your heads together here, I've been in the other room and lugged my men out of the window ; and, as you'd settled the chaise, I've put 'em in your mate's cart. They're strung together behind like calves, and if you come to the door, you'll see my subs drive 'em off."

Instantly there was a rush from the house, just in time to see Frost's cart, with the three prisoners huddled in the bottom, gallop away.

"Hooray !" cried Blouser, in high glee at the trick.

"Ho ! you're in it, air you ?" exclaimed Campbell. "Well, you aint a functionary : so there !"—and making a dart at his eyes, he tried to gouge him, but Blouser avoided the attack, at the same time administering a severe blow in return.

"Crack 'em and try 'em before you buy 'em," he said. "Will you buy, buy, buy, buy ?"

"Troth, he can't afford it, nohow, with his small mains," cried Pat Riley, laughing.

"Campbell drew his bowie-knife, but Blouser, with the same coolness and promptitude, producing a revolver, his assailant held back, and the affray ended in empty threats on one side, and defiance on the other.

Meanwhile, Ernest, alarmed at what he had heard respecting the approaching attack on Nauvoo, resolved to return to that city, and see to the safety of Jessie, feeling no interest in the fate of her father, except so far as it

involved her. He communicated his intention to Blouser and Riley, who readily agreed to bear him company, and having tried, by a tempting offer of dollars, to procure some means of conveyance, but without success, nothing remained but to proceed on foot.

"So you're goin' to hark back," said Frost, as Ernest was leaving the cabin.

"I'm returning to Nauvoo, to rescue this poor girl, and place her out of reach of violence," answered Ernest. I shall take her to New Orleans, where you can bring her father, if you obtain his release."

"If you go back, I go back. A likely thing I'll give my wife over to you."

"She's not your wife yet, and never will be, unless you accomplish what you've undertaken."

"Then, you come along with me, will you?"

"Most certainly not."

"You won't! Well, be it on your own head, then."

And shaking his clenched fist, he plunged into the thick of the wood, as if quite reckless where he went.

It was now getting dusk, but the three friends being pretty good woodsmen, resolved to push on, and indeed there was no time to lose, as Nauvoo might be destroyed before morning. The road was wide and clear, and having provided themselves with a couple of links, which were among the commodities vended at the cabin, they had no apprehension of being benighted. But the shadows quickly grew deeper, and they had not gone far when Ernest, who was walking a pace or two in front, heard a sharp click, and a bullet whizzed past, close to his ear.

They all sprang simultaneously to the side of the road, but hardly in time to see the figure of a man disappear, like an evil shadow, in the thicket.

"Thankee for nothing !" said Blouser, who set down the shot as aimed at himself by his late antagonist.

"Och ! the murderin' tief !" cried Riley. "Is it peasants he takes us for, bad luck to him !"

Ernest made no remark, but something within him—a mysterious unaccountable instinct—whispered that the shot came from Frost.



CHAPTER XXXI.

NAUVOO.

THE wail of the city rose to Heaven. The flames shot up as from a volcano, throwing a bright, ruddy glare on the sky ; miles off it was as light as noon, and all over the plain, wherever house or cabin stood, a beacon of fire marked the presence of the Avenger.

The three friends hurried on as fast as they could ; but Blouser and Riley, already much fagged, were unable to keep up with Ernest, who, indeed, seemed to forget they were with him, and finally left them far behind. His only thought was of Jessie—whether she would be murdered, or perish in the conflagration, before he could arrive to her assistance. He met stragglers flying from the city ; some almost naked, others bleeding and half dead, but he never stopped to speak to them, to make any inquiry, or answer any question, but only tried to quicken his pace. Panting, breathless, he still pushed on ; his hand pressed on his heart, his eye fixed on the blazing

city. Now the smoke came rushing down in dense volumes ; the air glowed like a furnace ; shrieks, and cries, and shouts, the fire of musketry and pistols, the clash of arms, the roar of the flames, the groans of the dying, the galloping of horse, the rush of fugitives and combatants—all proclaimed that he had entered Nauvoo.

He stumbled, and fell prostrate on a heap of bodies ; he plunged over the ankle in wet, and shuddered to think it was blood. But with the one fixed purpose in his mind, he continued his way, regardless of the challenge of sentinels, the whizzing shot, the falling buildings, the blazing fragments, which met him at every step. Now he was in the midst of the city : the temple, the second Zion, which had aimed to eclipse the glory of Solomon, was a mighty heap of fire ; instead of the gate of heaven, it seemed, as it might be, the mouth of hell. The flames soared high up in expiation of the blasphemy, the crime, the horrible license, which had scarred its unhallowed floor. The exulting shouts of the militia, mingled with the ribald song and the hymn of praise, according to the character of the band, added to the terror of the scene. But Ernest scarcely cast a glance at the glowing pile, the uproar giving wings to his feet. He plunged into a dark opening—dark with smoke, though the crackling flames rose on either side ; and five or six militia-men, who had caught sight of his retreating figure, dashed after him. A cry rose, but it was not from Ernest, who, as he flew along, heard the death-struggle close behind, but did not relax his pace. With his hands stretched out before him, as if to grope his way, yet proceeding at full speed, it was a wonder how he avoided every obstruction, keeping always in the mid-street. Presently he ran against two mobbers, coming from the opposite direction, and who, with a profane oath, demanded the Shibboleth, which he

was unable to give, but with a sudden effort, he flung them aside, and before they regained their feet, he was gone. In an instant he reached an open space, enclosed by a circle of fire, and now he discovered that, in his distraction, he had taken a wrong turning, and must retrace his steps to the temple. Back accordingly he went, now grasping a pistol, ready, if attacked, to defend himself to the last. The same sounds, the same hot, black smoke, rose everywhere around him, till the vapour grew light and fleecy under the lurid glare of the temple, and he reeled out, almost suffocated, into the great square. For a moment he could hardly breathe, and was stunned and bewildered. But quickly collecting himself, he set off again, and traversed another street. Here the incendiaries had not yet arrived, as the houses were still uninjured by the conflagration, and the unresisting inhabitants, aroused from their beds by the uproar, were flying unmolested to the fields. A few rapid steps brought Ernest to Clinton's door, and after trying in vain to force it open, he knocked long and loud. There was no response, and reflecting that Jessie would be too much alarmed to open the door, he ran round the side of the house, and clambered over the wall, hoping to gain ingress from the garden. At first he met with no better success, but a low window, which he was just able to reach, at length yielded to his efforts, and he made his way in.

It was pitch dark, but he groped from room to room, calling aloud to Jessie, and, to give her confidence, blended his own name with hers. One door, secured within, resisted his pressure, but only for an instant, when the object of his search stood before him.

"Jessie! you are here, then!" he cried, in his eagerness drawing her to him.

A frantic exclamation was the reply.

"Oh, Mr. Glynn!—oh, ERNEST!" she continued, in the terror and agitation of the moment scarcely knowing what she said.

"Yes, it is I," answered Ernest; "but we must not linger—every instant renders retreat more hopeless. You must come away directly."

But a stupor seemed to seize upon her, as if the uproar without, drawing nearer and nearer, made even his words fall unheeded, and she was sinking powerless on his arm, when, seeing her helplessness, he hurried her down stairs to the garden, intending to escape from the rear of the house. No other outlet, indeed, now remained, as a conflict was raging in the street, and if they showed themselves there, they would inevitably be butchered. With some difficulty Ernest raised her to the top of the wall, when a yell from the street announced that they were seen. But the increased peril gave the terrified girl nerve and energy. She sprang from the wall, leaving Ernest free to push on, while she kept close at his side; and soon he seized her hand and led her on. In a few minutes they reached a field and stood in the open country.

The fresh air came upon them like new life, but they did not pause to inhale it. So anxious was Jessie to proceed, that though the roar of the conflagration might have tempted even Lot to look back, she never turned her head. Field after field was crossed before they ventured to stop; then Ernest could not imagine where they were, or what direction to take, though the North Star, that unerring pilot, in some measure indicated his route. The ground became more rugged and difficult at every step, and at length they reached a stream, which a little examination showed to be a tributary of the Mississippi, traversing the whole country; but, though it was knee-

deep, Jessie waded across, and they gained the opposite side, a low bank, only to sink in a morass. Supported by Ernest, the jaded girl contrived to drag on a few steps, when they were again met by the water, which, taking a sharp sweep lower down, came up like a fresh stream. Ernest now began to fear they had become entangled in one of those water-courses so frequent in America, where the branches intersect particular spots like a net. Such was indeed the case, and in less than half a mile they had to cross the stream six times.

And now they were in the wood, with the thick, interlacing foliage overhead, shutting out the sky and the stars, and mantling everything in darkness. Ernest, as soon as he discerned his situation, would have turned back, but it was already too late, and the step he thought to retrace led him further into the forest. The only course, therefore, was to remain where they were till morning ; and, in fact, it was impossible to go on, for Jessie, who had hitherto evinced such perseverance, no longer dreading capture, lost her strength with her terror, and sank exhausted.

"You are completely worn out," said Ernest, in a tone of sympathy. "But you can lie down here in perfect safety. It will soon be daylight, and then we may find some cabin where you can obtain shelter."

"This will do very well, thank you," replied Jessie, "and when I have rested a little, I shall be glad to go on again. I am so sorry to be such a burden to you."

But Ernest assured her, as only he could, that she was none ; and strove to make her position as supportable as circumstances would permit. Fatigue, however, rendered her indifferent to everything but repose, and though she sat up for a few minutes, peering into the darkness with her aching eyes, it was in a half-lethargy, which gradually

deepened into sleep. Then Ernest took off his cloak, and laid it gently over her, while, with his arms crossed on his breast, he watched anxiously for the not distant morning.

CHAPTER XXXII.

JUDGE LYNCH.

DAY comes upon us in the woods with a cold grasp, albeit, as he looks us in the face, his glance is kindly and cheering. First a dim, obscure light steals around, just enough to show the darkness; then the gnarled stems of the trees loom up, like phantom sentinels, in shadowy outlines; then a silvery mist bursts through glade and copse and thicket, and we feel the virgin breath of morning.

Jessie still slept. The anxiety and apprehension which, for many weary nights, had kept sleep from her couch, the all-absorbing attachment which was the cloud, yet had often been the solace of her life, the conflict of feeling which had so long agitated, harassed, and distracted her, now, in the presence of Ernest, all subsided, like the sea after a tempest. It might be but the treacherous lull in the midst of the whirlwind—calm, silent, still; but with the masterless, headstrong instincts, gathering strength under the mask of repose for a new and more terrible outburst. Yet, in truth, the manly character of Ernest, the example of his moral elevation, had an effect on her own, and she rendered to his superior and stronger will the homage of the clairvoyante to the mesmerist. More especially since

their last interview, when passion had for a moment overpowered her, she seemed to learn from him the duty of self-command and self-denial, and felt a consolation, when she had once entered on the task, in the practice of such discipline. His image, indeed, was still enshrined in her heart—how could it be deposed? but it was as a monitor, as a guardian, as a guide; and, through the darkness of the present, Religion, like the Angel in the Sepulchre, announced a new and blessed covenant, which brought light, though not yet healing, on its wings.

The mist was still hanging about the trees when she awoke.

“How could you give me this?” she said to Ernest, reproachfully, observing the cloak he had thrown over her, “so much as you must have wanted it yourself! You never think of yourself!”

“You are not so used to camping out as I am,” answered Ernest, cheerfully. “But we shall both be the better for moving, if you are sufficiently rested; and, with this light, we may make our way along the side of the stream, and perhaps come to some road.”

“I can go any distance now,” replied Jessie. And she rose at once.

But progress, in the way Ernest proposed, was no easy matter, as they were obliged to keep close to the edge of the water; and the bank, besides being overgrown with rank grass reaching to the waist, was a perfect quagmire. But they had not gone far, when Ernest discerned a dark mass peering through the mist, which he thought might prove to be some building, and advancing further, they came to a saw-mill, backed by a couple of cabins formed of logs, with creepers clustering over the front. Smoke was already essaying to rise from the wide primitive chimneys; and a knock at the nearest door brought out the

owner, an old lumberer, looking as rough and rugged as Orson.

"We are lost in the wood," said Ernest, rather disconcerted by this unpromising figure. "If you will allow us to warm ourselves by your fire, and then set us in the way for Carthage, you will do us a great kindness, and I will gladly pay you for your trouble."

"Keep your money till it's axed for, stranger—that's my platform," replied the Satyr. "So you've been in the wood all night, han you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you airn from down West here, I reckon?"

"No, we're English."

"You? well!"—He dashed across the cabin to an inner door.—"Hi! Poll, Pru!—here airn two Britishers."

A visitor of any kind at the sawyer's hut was a *rara avis*; but the arrival of two Britishers was indeed an event, and the wife and daughter of the Satyr, forgetting everything in their curiosity, made their appearance in the front room, in a lamentable state of *deshabille*. But the daughter, a perfect impersonation of the Nut-Brown Maid, well sustaining her name of Prudence, retreated on seeing Ernest, and contented herself with peeping round the inner door, jerking back her head, every now and then, when there was any risk of being observed. Her mother, on the other hand, no sooner caught sight of Jessie, than, touched by her deplorable appearance, she took her by the hand, and drew her into the cabin.

"Well, there's no doubtin' you'n bin all night in the woods, lass," she said, "Come in to the fire win you. There you, Pru!—well, the wench ha' got stract, I guess—you gin on the cocoa—you hear!"

That Pru heard, there could be little doubt, as on mention of her name, her head, which had been reconnoitring,

instantly disappeared, nor could all the oburgations of her mother, nor the raillery of the Satyr, whose authority seemed to carry still less weight, lure her from the inner den, where she could be heard pleading the presence of "The Britisher chap," as an excuse for her wilfulness. But Jessie was now seated comfortably by the fire, though the smoke, to which the capacious chimney afforded anything but a free outlet, proved rather disagreeable. A pot of odorous cocoa, with some rashers of bacon, and a loaf of home-made bread, none the less sweet for being composed of Indian corn, soon decked the table; and Ernest did ample justice to the fare. The tobacco-box, however, which his host presented as pertinaciously as Major Hornblower, he constantly declined.

The sawyer, though living within a dozen miles of the Mormon settlement, had heard nothing of the recent disturbance—so completely was he cut off by the forest from the haunts of men; and Ernest, to avoid exciting any ill feeling, was careful to make no allusion to the fanatics. Indeed, the curiosity of the worthy couple was so exclusively directed to topics connected with England, that it would have been difficult, had he been inclined, to speak on any other subject; and the Satyr's wife was especially inquisitive in all that related to Queen Victoria, and the young royal family, whom, having seen them during his stay in London, Ernest was enabled to describe. The Satyr asked several questions about General Wellington, whom he considered to come about next to Washington, though old Hickory, he expected, would, if it ever came to a trial, be no long chalk behind.

Anxious to make the best of his way to Carthage, Ernest, as soon as Jessie was sufficiently rested, proposed to depart, when the sawyer announced his intention of putting to his horse, and driving them to the city.

Accordingly they took leave of the hostess, as well as of Prudence, who, at this critical moment, was prevailed upon to come forward and shake hands; and then set forward for Carthage.

As they drew near the city, they met straggling parties of militia and gangs of mobbers, returning from the massacre of the previous night, the American Saint Bartholomew, in which, according to some accounts, twenty thousand Mormons perished. The city itself was in an agitated state, and Ernest, though no longer expecting molestation, was glad to see Jessie safely lodged in an hotel, where he could leave her without apprehension, while he went in search of Blouser and Riley, about whom, as he had left them on their way to Nauvoo, he began to feel very uneasy.

Having bid adieu to the honest sawyer, who gruffly refused all recompense for his hospitality and trouble, he was passing forth, when he came suddenly upon Frost, who, with too much reason, started back as he observed him, raising his eyes to his face with a searching look, in which hate and distrust were mingled with apprehension. At another time, this might have confirmed Ernest in his suspicion that the bailiff was the assassin of the forest, but from the report since made of him by Jessie, he was inclined to regard him more favourably, and now thought with Blouser that the shot had been fired by Campbell. He received him, therefore, with less hauteur than usual, which, of course, only rendered Frost more distrustful.

"I have brought away Jessie Clinton," he said, imagining that would be the bailiff's first thought. "She is here if you like to see her."

"And why shouldn't I?" replied Frost, sulkily.

"Nay, I know no reason. Have you been able to do anything in reference to her father?"

"Perhaps I have. But as you wouldn't help, there's no good telling you."

"Very well," rejoined Ernest; and he was turning away, when, to his great satisfaction, he espied Blouser and Riley, the former of whom, overjoyed at the encounter, immediately threw up his hat, at the same time crying out—"Here we are again!"

"And your honour's safe and sound in wind and limb, like Mick O'Shaughnessy's horse," said Riley, with warmth, "Och, sure, it was awful—awful! Mr. Blouser and myself never thought to see you again, sir—that's the truth; and, poor gentleman, he's been frettin' his life out about it."

"Riley, ditto," said Blouser. "Brick."

"I should be stone if I were insensible of his kindness, or yours either," replied Ernest. "But what are you going to do? If you remain here to-day, we may see this tragedy played out, and to-morrow we can start for New York together."

"Port it is!" returned Blouser, hugging an imaginary helm to his hips.

Here Frost, who had gone into the hotel merely to exchange a few words with Jessie, reappeared.

"Enter Caliban," muttered Blouser.

"She wants you to go with me," said Frost to Ernest, "Will you, or won't you?"

"For what purpose?" answered Ernest.

"Well, you'll see, if you're willin'. But here they come now—here they tumble up: nice-uns, airnt they?"

All followed the direction of his eye, and perceived, at the end of the street, a concourse of people approaching, in a compact body, and without noise or tumult, as if resolutely bent on some settled purpose; and Ernest instinctively felt that he was now in the presence of one

of those irresistible assemblages, which in the remote parts of the States, usurp, often from necessity, the most terrible functions of the law. None but those who have witnessed such scenes can form any conception of the impression they produce—the sense of awe and doubt, the wild confusion of right and wrong, the quick beating of the heart, the hesitation, bewilderment, and indecision, which for the moment paralyze the strongest nerves. The avenging crowd are not like a mob, but have the appearance of an organized legion legally invested with the attributes they claim—as if the mantle of the judge, with its solemn, imposing associations, really rested upon them. It is true, many of the concourse now approaching, fearing ulterior consequences, had their faces blackened, in order to avoid recognition, but the greater number sought no disguise, appearing boldly in the foremost ranks. Nor did well-known citizens scruple to join the throng, as it traversed the streets ; while all, by their demeanour as it passed, gave the demonstration their tacit sanction.

It was no secret that the object of the Vigilants was to inflict summary justice on the Mormon prisoners—Joe Smith and his accomplices ; and they bent their steps direct to the gaol. The space in front of the building was immediately choked up, and a formal summons to the gaoler, to deliver up his charge, receiving no answer, an attack was at once commenced.

The gaol was built in a square, with an open court in the middle ; and the upper story, which was a recent addition, was pierced by a row of windows, enframed by iron spikes. There was no entrance but a door, completely plated with iron, and so narrow that it would not admit more than two abreast. Every method was tried

to break in this barrier, but without effect ; and the ringleaders were debating what should be done, when a blacksmith appeared, and deliberately set to work to force the door. This was characteristic of all the proceedings, the great feature being the utter absence of hurry, uproar, or confusion, giving the most lawless act a strangely grave and imposing character.

Ernest, who had joined the throng as a spectator, now found himself close to the gaol-door, towards which he was impelled in the rush, without the possibility of extrication, and, after a vain effort to get free, he quietly resigned himself to the press. The door, though strongly barricaded, was at length broken down, affording admittance to several resolute men, who, pushed on by those behind, speedily forced their way over the wreck within. But here they encountered an unexpected obstacle in the States' Marshal, who, though deserted by the gaoler, stood before them revolver in hand, determined to dispute the passage.

"Now I expect you're not comin' any further, citizens," he said, "and as long as I can help it, you shan't—that's a fact. I'm only a single man standing here, but I represent the whole Union, and I'll do my duty by my country and the constitution: so if you want my life, take it, but you only go along here over my corpse."

Nobody in America thinks of molesting the functionaries of the State, and the resolution of the Marshal, instead of exposing him to hostility, only excited respect. But the fixed purpose of the mob remained unshaken.

"Now you've done all you can, and it's no use," cried a ringleader: "so stand aside." And there was a shout of approbation, amidst which the men in front, still impelled by the mass, made a dash forward, but were flung back

by the Marshal, though one contrived to elude his grasp, and got past, disappearing up the passage. The interloper was Frost.

Ascending with rapid strides a flight of steps, with which he seemed familiar, he ran along an upper corridor to a door, the crazy lock of which yielded to his first assault. The three prisoners, who were no strangers to what was passing below, sprang up as he entered.

"I'll have life for life," cried Hiram, brandishing a bar of iron, which he had wrenched from the bedstead.

"I will plead with you, brother, as man to man," said Joe, his face white as ashes. "Ha ! Frost !"

The bailiff pounced upon Clinton.—"It's you I want, old man," he said, "Come along, for your life—without a word, or you'll be torn to pieces where you stand. Come." And he drew him towards the door.

"Oh ! you'rn he—you !" cried Clinton, suddenly pushing him off. "You 'n goin' to marry my girl, arn 'ee ?"

"Are you mad ?" exclaimed Frost. "I tell you, you're a dead man, if you don't come off with me at once, and—But now you hear 'em ! It's too late."

Footsteps indeed were heard on the stairs, and the two Smiths, who had just made for the door, rushed back in despair. But Hiram, more self-possessed than his brother, slammed to the door, and blocked it up with the bedstead.

"You've only one chance now," said Frost, still addressing Clinton. "There's a ledge running along from the window—if you can keep your footing, you may reach the top of the wall, and jump into the field. Now then."

With one blow of Hiram's bar, which he had caught up from the floor, he broke through the window, but

while he was urging Clinton to pass forth, Joe and Hiram clambered up, and gained the ledge. Clinton, who would never have moved at the suggestion of Frost, seeing his prophet disappear, quickly followed, leaving Frost in the cell.

The ledge, which had formed the coping of the building when it consisted only of a basement story, and had been built in on the addition of the upper structure, afforded but a precarious footing, but when there is no alternative but death, men will boldly face difficulties which at another time would seem insuperable. Quaking with terror, his knees bending under him, his brain in a whirl, Joe Smith yet contrived to keep his balance, and, perhaps, would have reached the wall, had there been time. But his enemies now poured into the court below. A terrific yell broke from a hundred voices, as the prophet was descried, and as many weapons belched forth their messages of death. As the smoke cleared away, the lifeless bodies of Hiram and Clinton were seen stretched in the court, but Joe, the aim of every rifle, was still on the ledge. But a ruddy stream was gushing from his temple ; his tall form pressed back against the wall, gave one sway forward ; and he fell into the yard. With a wild shout, they gathered round him, and more than one rugged hand clutched at his stiffening limbs, as with a convulsive shudder, he faintly murmured the terrible words "O, LORD MY GOD."

Joe Smith was dead.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE RETURN.

CLARA MEREDITH was utterly unable to account for Ernest's sudden disappearance. At first, she supposed that, from some cause or other, his visits had been interrupted for a day or two, and that he would soon present himself as usual. But as day succeeded day, and no Ernest appeared, she began to fear that he might be ill, and, at her request, the Judge sent to make inquiries. Then it was discovered, to the Judge's great satisfaction, that the Englishman had relinquished his situation, and quitted New York, without leaving any intimation as to where he was going.

The first effect of this intelligence on Clara was to excite a feeling of resentment. Such cavalier treatment seemed to her, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, not only an unworthy return for the kindly welcome Ernest had always received at her father's house—not only a slight on herself, but to evince, by implication, a sort of contempt for her country : the arrogant Saxon, from the elevation of his European pedigree, probably looked down with scorn on the parvenu citizens of the new world. All the woman, and all the patriot, fired at the supposition. She now reverted to his silent manifestations of devotion, paraded, as she thought, so adroitly and craftily, with mortification and shame, irritated at the reflection that she had been so deluded by the tricks of an impostor, who, she blushed to think, still found an advocate in her heart.

Yes, the kind, gentle, loving heart rose in opposition to her will, her pride, her petulance : it rode, a little ark, safe amidst the turbulent deluge of passion and resentment, by which she might otherwise have been overwhelmed ; and, as her angry feelings subsided, the bird of memory brought back more than one tender recollection, as an olive-branch of promise for the future.

Thus, as time sped on, she invented excuses for Ernest, in answer to the upbraidings of her judgment. She reflected that, in struggling to advance his fortune, he was liable to be called away suddenly at any moment, and, perhaps, had been so hurried, that he was unable to bid her farewell. But could he not have written ? Was it not due to her, as a friend, apart from any other considerations (supposing such to exist), that he should say at least where he was going to, before he absented himself for so long a time ? But probably he was not aware, on setting out, that his absence would be so protracted. It might be that he had gone on some expedition, the object of which he could only communicate in person, and that, from causes yet to be disclosed, he deferred an explanation till his return. Perhaps, even now he was depending on her forbearance, her generosity, and her indulgent judgment, assured that, though appearances might tell against him, she would not condemn him unheard. And some such thought—such hope—was indeed cherished by Ernest, as a miser might hoard his gold.

Yet with all her confidence in the Englishman—with all her apologies for his inattention, Clara could not but feel a woman's pique, if not something akin to jealousy, at his continued silence. It was in vain she tried to smother the feeling, as, despite her prepossessions, it gained strength every day. This, however, was not so prejudicial to his interests as might be imagined. If it

placed him in a light which he would have blushed to deserve, it still kept him constantly in her mind, in her thoughts,—perchance in her heart. Love, child as we depict him, is not killed by a stab; and woman presses the rose to her bosom, though it may tear her with its thorn.

One thing connected with the event gave Clara satisfaction, if not consolation; and that was the manner in which her cousin uniformly avoided referring to it. She felt grateful to him for his silence, which, well knowing his love, his sensitive feelings, and his lurking distrust of foreigners, she interpreted as the forbearance and magnanimity of a chivalrous rival. She judged his nature by her own, unconscious of the envy, hatred, and malice, the sordid stratum of clay, that leavened and envenomed it. True, he cast no stone; but why, when Ernest was arraigned, did he steal away from the judge without disclosing the facts? He was but too sensible of his treachery, though the aphorism of the poet, that in love and war everything is fair, hushed the accusing voice within—as if even in war we may pilfer the colours of an enemy, when we have mutually agreed on a truce!

But duplicity, with its fair outside, was for the moment triumphant, as it too often is, and Wilmore was received by Clara with so much kindness, and such an unaffected welcome, that he was perpetually rejoicing at Ernest's absence. He seemed to have gone back to old times, when Clara, in all her occupations and pleasures, had but one companion and one friend, himself! Instead of being touched by Ernest's generosity, he now brought himself to think of him with more rancour, as having by his unwarranted intrusion so long interrupted and deferred his

happiness. He even began to suspect the motives of his voluntary withdrawal, and to conceive that, while assuming an air of bravado and unconcern, Ernest had really been intimidated by his desperation : so difficult is it for a mind incapable of a lofty action, to understand the feelings which dictate it.

And now his life was one whirl of rapture. In Clara's presence time was as nothing ; and the days scarcely dawned when they were gone—gone too soon, perhaps, for his peace. The period of his rival's banishment drew to a close, and he had not yet secured the prize. His love, the deep, absorbing passion of his soul, was yet untold, though it was evinced in his every look. And Clara must see, must be sensible, how completely she possessed his affections—nay, obviously regarded his suit with sympathy and favour, though, whenever he approached the subject, a perverse fate always raised some obstacle to an explanation. But delay would now be fatal : the night had at length arrived when the term conceded by Ernest would expire. On the morrow, his rival, if his passion were as sincere as his own, would again present himself, and then all his labour must be begun anew.

Opportunity seemed to sanction his purpose. The judge, of whose countenance he was already secure, had gone to attend a political banquet ; and the two cousins were alone.

It was a spring evening, mild, balmy, and genial, the air breathing a soft promise of summer. Clara, so beautiful, so radiant, in the first blush and bloom of womanhood, was the very impersonation of the season. The bright tints in her cheek were the opening rose-bud ; the sweet, ruddy lips were the glowing blossom ; the smooth and dazzling forehead was the morning sunshine ; the soft,

subdued glance was the voluptuous twilight ; the long silken lashes that fringed her eyes, like a delicate veil, were the shade of the verdant foliage.

“ I am so glad to be alone with you to-night, Clara,” said Wilmore. “ This is the anniversary of the last evening we were together before you sailed for England. Do you remember it ?”

“ Perfectly,” replied Clara, with a smile, which, however, partook somewhat of sadness. “ That evening had associations I can never forget, and they affected me so much—involving as they did a separation from all I loved and valued, that even the prospect of visiting the old world, to which I had long looked forward, for the moment seemed a misfortune ; and I began to cling more fondly to home.”

“ Would you had never left it !”

“ Your old prejudice. You fancy one can’t go to Europe without bringing back some of its antiquated conventionalisms ; but surely you can hardly accuse me of such backsliding.”

“ No one can impute anything to you that is not proper and becoming ; but——”

“ Nay, no but, if you please,” cried Clara, interrupting him, while she looked up with an arch glance. “ The first part of your speech might have been uttered at any court in Europe, and now I see you are coming back to plain America. You are going to say something not so complimentary.”

“ Not a word displeasing to you—for worlds. As to the language of courts, you know I condemn it ; and the plainness of America—the plainness of her speech, and manners, and institutions, is what I admire and venerate. But it is no flattery, dear Clara, to say I believe you to be everything that is beautiful and good ; nor can it offend

you, if I fear you have been impressed more than you imagine—I won't say by the pomp and circumstance, but by the polish, if you will, of the old world. As you have just said, we republicans are plain—a little rough, perhaps ; and ladies are more attracted by the easy air of the gallant."

"As much as to say we look more to the casket than its contents," observed Clara, reproachfully.

"Then I am unhappy at expressing myself ; for that is not my meaning. But let me tell you, in words you can't mistake, what were my thoughts, my hopes, my ardent aspirations, on that sad evening, when we were to part for so long a time. Ah ! don't turn away, dear Clara. You know what I told you then—how I loved you, how I should always love you, and live and die for you ! Do you forget my words, my vows ?"

"No," said Clara, agitated. "I remember well how kind you were to me—how sorry you were at my going away. But I was sorry, too, as you know. I was a child, and you were only a stripling, and we never sought to conceal our feelings. But that time is gone ; let us think of it no more."

"Oh ! Clara, can you say that ? Think of it no more ? As easily might I forget my name, my being ! I think of it day and night, every hour of my life ! Let me tell you, dear Clara—tell you at your feet——"

"No, no, not now," said Clara in a tone of entreaty, and half rising.

"Now—now !" exclaimed Wilmore, distractedly. "I have waited long for this moment : to-morrow may be too late."

"Not so, Alfred," said Clara, all her composure returning in a moment, while she laid her hand affectionately on his arm : "if you must tell me, let it be to-morrow."

"When HE is here!" cried the unhappy man, in a paroxysm of despair.

"HE!"

"Yes, the Englishman. Miserable that I am!"

"Do you mean Mr. Glynn will be here to-morrow?" said Clara, unable to repress her emotion. "You're silent! you are concealing something from me—yes, I see it in your face. He has written to you."

"No! believe me he has not."

"Then how do you know he will be here to-morrow?"

"You will be angry at my not telling you before! Do not frown, dear Clara, or you will kill me! I considered it as almost a part of our compact."

"Compact!"

"He engaged to be absent from New York for six months; and the time expires——"

"To-morrow?"

"Strictly speaking, to-night," said Wilmore, falteringly. "But he will hardly come to-night."—And he seemed to recoil at the thought.

"Then it was late when you parted?" said Clara, her lips quivering.

"Not so late; it might be about this time. I remember it, for as he went out I heard the hour strike, and it was nine o'clock."

As he spoke, a time-piece just behind where he stood began to strike, startling both himself and Clara. It was nine, and as the last stroke pealed forth, there was a loud ring at the bell.

"It is he!" cried Wilmore, frantically.

"For shame, Alfred," exclaimed Clara, though her own heart fluttered. "Why will you indulge in such foolish anticipations? Be more composed—more yourself."





But a step was heard in the passage ; the door was thrown open ; and, as the negro servant pronounced the familiar name, Ernest entered.

If he had been doubtful of his reception, a glance at Clara, as he advanced towards her, reassured him. At that moment all her resentment vanished. Still unable to account for his absence, sensible that some mystery was connected with it, she yet saw, whencesoever it had arisen, that the very instant the term fixed upon had expired, his first thought was of her. This was an act of homage which her woman's heart knew well how to interpret ; and, while it was his best plea for forgiveness, brought a flush of triumph to her cheek, such as it had not known since his departure.

"You don't ask me where I have been," said Ernest as they sat down.

"No," replied Clara. "You will tell me, perhaps, some day."

"It is quite a history."

"And a mystery, too, it would seem."

"Let it remain so, then, if you are content."

"And if I am not content?"

"Then, perhaps, your cousin will help me out," said Ernest, with a glance at Wilmore.

"Sir!" exclaimed Wilmore, in a freezing tone.

"You have been so long away, Alfred has had time to forget all about you," said Clara, resenting his abruptness. "If you go off again in such a manner, you must not be surprised to see yourself advertised, something in this wise—Lost, stolen, or strayed, a young Englishman, of—let us see—how many feet?"

"Two," said Ernest, with a glance at his boots.

"Of two feet, and of course the same number of hands,"

rejoined Clara. "And we must say of gentlemanly appearance."

"Appearances are often deceptive," muttered Wilmore, invidiously.

"No one can know that better than yourself," remarked Ernest. "But this is the lesson of cities, and I have just come from a place where men speak as they think, and act as they speak."

"And where is that Utopia?" asked Clara, smiling.

"In the backwoods."

"Oh! you have been there, have you?"

"Yes, and I was presented to the sovereign of the country—a despot in his way."

"You are thinking of your own country, sir," said Wilmore, with an ironical smile. "Despots are unknown in America."

"Because the same thing is called a judge here," answered Ernest. "You have heard of this one, I'm sure. His name is Lynch."

"I told you how it was," said Wilmore to Clara, with an exulting glance. "Mr. Glynn sees all things here in one light."

Clara looked grave, but her father coming in at the moment, she made no reply.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LOVE AND HONOUR.

THAT night, Ernest thought over his relations with Clara and her father long and seriously, as indeed he had often done before, but never in the same spirit, or from the

same point of view. It now occurred to him that he ought not to visit at the judge's house, except in his real character, as the suitor of Clara ; or he might, at a future time, justly be accused of having sought to entrap her affections, while he was disguising his own—in fact, of pursuing in secret an object which he was ashamed and afraid to avow.

He had come back to her, after so long a separation, more infatuated than ever, inspired by the thought of seeing and meeting her again, of hearing the music of her voice, and beholding the light of her smile. If the anticipation had filled him with transport, how much had it been surpassed by the reality ! He found her more beautiful, more fascinating, more enchanting, than imagination, in its wildest flight, had loved to picture her. As the divine harp of David stilled the evil spirit in Saul's breast, so the melody of her words, the spell of her beauty, threw a chain, as it were, over every dark feeling of his nature, and, under this influence, passion was linked in his bosom with innocence and truth. In her presence every moment brought its rapture ; every thought was a fresh joy. And something still told him, as it had often done before, that she was not insensible of his attachment, or indifferent to his devotion : that his love might be returned !

What a thought ! what a hope ! It thrilled through him, as if it fired at once his body and his spirit : he was animated, so to speak, by a new vitality ; and his feet seemed to rise from the ground, as his soul from the earth.

Such was the dream by which he was entranced—the pursuit he was now to abandon ; for, in effect, to disclose his attachment to the judge, while he was without either position or fortune, would, he felt, be nothing less. But,

if he valued his own self-respect, no other course was open to him. Clara was dearer to him than life, but honour must be more precious still ; and it spoke to him now, as at every period of his life, in accents he could not disregard.

But how could he be sure that the judge would prohibit his suit ? Had he not, from the very first, always treated him with the utmost kindness and consideration, though apprised by himself of the inferiority of his means ? Was it not the main article of his political creed, that wealth conferred no dignity on its possessor, that it did not morally raise one above another, but that all men, rich and poor alike, were equal ? Base, indeed, would he be, to repay the cordiality of such a nature, the ingenuousness and unsuspecting frankness of such noble principles, by entering the house of his friend with sinister pretensions, and, while he approached the father as a guest, appear in another character to the daughter.

Moreover, he did not seek the immediate, complete consummation of his happiness. All he asked was, not Clara's hand, but permission to solicit her love. Could he obtain that, he might, by renewed and unremitted diligence, soon improve his position, and be able to offer her at least a respectable home. Meanwhile, he did not care for her fortune ; he could tell the judge *that*—and, of course, the judge, himself actuated by such enlightened sentiments, would give his assertion implicit credit.

The result of all these reflections was, that Ernest, on the following morning, found himself at the door of the judge's mansion in a more composed frame of mind than might have been expected, considering the momentous errand on which he was bound ; and though his resolution faltered as he was ushered into the library, and found

himself alone with the American magnate, it was only for a moment, when all his courage and decision revived.

There was something constrained in the Judge's manner, as he returned his salutation ; and, to say truth, so early and formal a visit, taken in connection with other circumstances, in some measure foreshadowed his object.

" I have thought it well to speak to you, sir, before I resume my visits at your house, on a subject of great importance to both of us," said Ernest. " May I hope you will hear me with your accustomed indulgence, even though you may not approve of my views ?"

The Judge inclined his head.

" I need hardly tell you, sir," pursued Ernest, " that, since I have had the privilege of being admitted to your house, I have been constantly in the society of Miss Meredith ; and to enjoy this happiness, and be insensible to her attractions, would, of course, be impossible. I will not conceal from you that I felt their influence immediately ; and therefore, when you threw your doors open to me, I would not avail myself of your invitation till I had acquainted you with my position and circumstances, that you might know who it was you received under your roof."

" I remember, sir," observed the Judge, stiffly. " Your conduct on that occasion won my confidence, which I hope I shall never have reason to regret."

Ernest bowed.—" Never, if I can help it, sir," he said, with emotion. " It is on this account that I have come to you this morning. I love Miss Meredith. I feel I cannot see her again without telling her so—that my happiness, my peace, my life are centred in her, and inseparable from her. I could not say this to her till I had first communicated it to you—till I had obtained

your sanction to my addresses. You hear me, and are not angry—do not even upbraid or interrupt me.”—His voice faltered, but he continued—“Oh, sir, is it possible you can approve of my suit?”

“No,” replied the judge, in a tone firm but kind; “and you will, I am sure, see, on reflection, it is unreasonable to expect I should.”

Ernest’s head drooped.

“In the first place,” continued the judge, assuming his forensic air, “there is one objection to your proposal, which I am surprised a person of your discernment should have overlooked. Far be it from me to say anything which may give you pain, but does it not strike you that Miss Meredith, as heiress to a large fortune, can only be united to a person—I will not say of her own rank in life (for rank I despise), but of proportionate means? Wealth, in an artificial state of society, is one of the conditions of being, and, lightly as I hold it myself, it entails on us certain concessions to appearances, which are a part and parcel of its functions.”

“I have always thought you considered wealth an evil, sir,” said Ernest: “and, indeed, this impression has made me more hopeful of obtaining your countenance. I was not ignorant of Miss Meredith’s superiority to myself in point of fortune, as in everything else; but having frequently heard you lament the great inequality in the distribution of riches, and contend that all property ought to be held in common, I imagined you would not consider my humble circumstances a fatal objection, so long as I strove diligently to amend and improve them.”

“I feel grateful to you, my young friend, for that reference to my opinions,” answered the Judge. “If the world would be advised by me—if it would come back to first principles—then these social barriers would no longer

exist. Can there be a stronger argument in favour of my views than this very case? Here are you, a young man whom every one must respect, with everything to recommend you, and attached, as I verily believe, to my daughter, and what is the first obstacle to your success? Want of fortune! Can anything be more preposterous? Were it the want of an eye, of an arm, even of a tooth, I could understand it. But it is the want of base, sordid, worthless lucre. The world will not hear of your marrying Miss Meredith, because you have no fortune: take away her fortune, and you are equal: that is what it amounts to."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, take it away, sir!" exclaimed Ernest, piteously.

"Eh!" cried the judge, elevating his eyebrows.

"I say, keep her fortune, bury it, throw it to the winds," cried the despairing lover; "and give her to me penniless, if she will have me. Oh! what are riches—what all the honours of the world, if the heart is desolate, the mind seared, the affections blighted? You may double Miss Meredith's fortune, but will that insure her happiness? And if you sell her into bondage, will it be any compensation that her bonds are gold?"

"Precisely what I would say myself," observed the Judge. "This is a perfect illustration of what I have been all my life asserting."

"Then, assert it no more, sir," cried Ernest, bitterly, "or it may be said you denounce in others what you practise yourself."

"Not I, but the world," exclaimed the Judge, shrinking. "I tell you my sentiments candidly and unreservedly: I proclaim them to every one; but——"

"You don't act up to them," said Ernest. "Pardon me, if I seem to speak too boldly: it is not in anger, but

in the sorrow and agony of my soul. I came to you strong in the great principles you profess ; and you spurn me because I am poor." His voice failed him, and he turned away in despair.

"Stop," cried the Judge, touched alike by his emotion, and by his denunciation : "don't go away with the impression that it is solely on account of your circumstances I discountenance your addresses to Miss Meredith. I have indeed urged this reason in deference to the usages of the world, though in violence to my own feelings. But, to be frank with you, I have already accepted a proposal from my nephew Wilmore, and he is now pleading his own cause with my daughter."

"Let him plead !" said Ernest, passionately. "Not for worlds would I interfere with his suit ; but if it fails—if it is rejected—then, at least, permit me to urge mine."

At this moment, Wilmore, supposing the Judge to be alone, entered the room. He started on seeing Ernest, but instantly his eye gleamed with malicious triumph.

"You have succeeded, then?" cried Ernest, his brain on fire. "Oh !" he exclaimed, in an imploring tone, to the Judge : "let me but say how I love her—how I adore her ; and I quit your house for ever."

"It cannot be !" replied the Judge, though with a glance of indecision at his nephew.

"He won't do what she requires," murmured Wilmore.

And he added aloud—"Mr. Glynn has a claim to what he requests : he can hear Miss Meredith's decision from her own lips."

"Come, then," said the Judge to Ernest. "You have acted like a man of honour : you shall be treated as one." And he led the way to the drawing-room.

Clara was seated on a couch, her head bowed upon her

hand, and so absorbed in reverie, that Ernest, parting with the Judge at the door, entered unheeded.

Her appearance confirmed his fears : he now saw, what he had dreaded before, that she had given herself to his rival, and that he stood there a lost and blasted man. But a sudden impulse seized him ; and throwing himself at her feet, he clasped her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

She seemed to know he could not speak ; and though she turned away, it was with such gentleness, such reluctance, that it was more a response than a repulse.

“Will you hear me, Clara?” he said, at length. “May I tell you how I love you? how I have loved from the moment I first heard your voice, before I was sensible of your perfections?”—He looked up at her, and she did not now avert her face, but it was grave and sad.

“I have come too late!” exclaimed Ernest, in a tone of anguish, as he sat down beside her. “You may hear me, but can’t be mine—for you no longer have power to choose!”

“You love me, then?” said Clara.

“With all my heart and life and soul!”

“But you know there is a barrier to our union?”

“Too well!” exclaimed Ernest, distractedly. “Would the devotion of a life could remove it!”

“Its removal rests with yourself.”

“With me!” cried Ernest, with sudden rapture. “Oh, Clara! do I hear aright? Only tell me what the obstacle is, and it shall no longer exist.”

“It need not, indeed, if you are sincere,” answered Clara, tenderly ; “but I have made a vow that I will never give my hand to any one but an American citizen ; you are qualified to become one, and can take out your certificate of citizenship when you please. You shrink ! Is this your love?”

"Oh, Clara, what do you ask of me?"

"That you should swear allegiance to my country."

"And renounce that I owe to my own. Do you forget this is especially mentioned in the oath?"

"Ah, now I see it is true," exclaimed Clara. "Your love is the fancy of the moment, which has no real existence. How can I confide in your affection for me, if you have none for my country?"

"But I *have*, Clara. I admire and commend your country. I rejoice at its noble aspirations, its mighty destiny; only my heart clings to England—my native land, with the feeling of a child for its parent."

"An unnatural parent, who denies her children bread!" said Clara, with bitterness.

"Yet the tie of nature remains," returned Ernest. "Can you wish me to rend it?"

"If you don't, you have come here for an unworthy object—to amass wealth, that you may return to spend it in England. England casts you out—America receives you; and you repay her hospitality by desertion. This may be loyalty to your own country, but is it not treason to mine?"

"Treason is a hard word. I visited America for a purpose which may be honestly sought in any part of the world—to improve my fortune; and I owe no obligation to the land I reside in beyond present obedience to her laws. America has afforded me a home, but England gives the same welcome to Americans, and not to them only, but to all the nations of the earth. There, every one comes and goes without hindrance or inquiry, and nobody interferes with either their principles or their religion. Would you establish such restrictions in America, where freedom is the national boast?"

"Those who seek our shores for their own interest should be bound to remain—not press the juice from the fruit, and then throw away the husk. If you loved me as you say"—and tears gathered in her eyes—"you would not seek to tear me from my home!"

"Never—never could I do you such a wrong!" cried Ernest, passionately. "No, if you will share my humble prospects, Clara—if you will bless my life with your presence, here we will live and die. Where you are is my country—my world. Dwell where we may—in the forest, in the wilderness, if you are there I shall think it a paradise."

"Then you consent?" said Clara, with a look of exquisite tenderness.

"Never to quit America," exclaimed Ernest.

Clara drew back. "This is not it!" she said; "I ask you to enrol yourself an American citizen."

Ernest buried his face in his hands.

"You will not say yes. Cruel!—can you love me?"

"Better than life!" exclaimed Ernest.

"But not better than England!" said Clara.

Ernest was silent.

A wild paroxysm seemed to seize upon the girl, as if all the evil impulses of her nature, combining in an irresistible effort, had, for the moment, mastered the good, throwing a shadow over her beauty like a cloud over the sun. With her hand pressed on her bosom, as though she would still the waves of passion that raged within, she stood silent for an instant, lost in the chaos of tumultuous thoughts that whirled through her brain. But the spirit of destiny was upon her; the words rose to her lips like fire, and they burst forth uncontrolled.

"Ernest, I ask you for the last time, will you become a

citizen of the republic? Assent will be a proof of your love for me—is a condition of our union. Speak, or let us for the future be strangers.”

“Oh! Clara, listen to me! For pity’s sake—for your own——”

“You won’t!” cried the excited girl. “Then, go—leave me! I will not hear you—not a word, not a syllable. Go—for ever!”

He gave her one look—a look of stone, without light, without reason—and the next moment he was in the street.

He had not passed out unseen. Wilmore, too uneasy to remain aloof, was watching for the termination of his interview, and saw what had been its result. As the door closed on his rival, he was again at Clara’s side.

“My Clara, my life, in tears!” he exclaimed. “Tell me who has offended you, and you shall be avenged. But I know who it is—this braggart Englishman, who has come here to destroy the peace of our household, to blast our happiness, and to mock at our country!”

“To mock?” said Clara; and her whole frame seemed to dilate.

“Yes; his every word, his every look was a taunt and sneer at us. I have told you so all along. And now you have heard it from his own lips, for he has rejected the test you proposed—spurned it, though offered by your hand.”

Clara’s face kindled.

“Do you imagine this man could love you, Clara?” continued Wilmore, with renewed vehemence. “What could you ask of me that I would refuse? And you will let this stranger, this would-be aristocrat, triumph over me—set his foot upon me, and not only on me, but on yourself!”

"He is not likely to do that," said Clara, with a bitter scornful smile.

"He will do it in imagination," returned Wilmore. And another Tempter, her own poor human heart, was beguiling her within. "And I, what a fate is mine!—loving, adoring, yet for ever made miserable."

"I pity you, dear Alfred."

"Say you love me, Clara. You must—in your soul, you must."—And he twined his arm round her, and gazed in her pale face.—"Oh! would you see me mad, dead?"

"Horrible!" cried Clara, shuddering.

"I tell you even madness would be a relief, if you drive me from you!" exclaimed Wilmore. "Much more, since I see you insulted and humiliated—" Clara gave a start—"for a slight to your country is, with your known feelings on this point, a slight to yourself. Ah, Clara! I implore you, by all you hold sacred and good—by our early association, our early love, not to give me over to despair, but accept me for your husband, as I have always been your companion, and so vindicate and avenge yourself, while you bless me."

She did not reply, but his arm still encircled her; and, though he drew her closer to him, she made no effort to free herself.

"Oh! tell me you will be mine!" he said, beseechingly. "You consent!—you consent!"

"Yes!" was the scarcely audible answer.

HIS! what a delusion! Was, then, the petulant dictate of pique, the suggestion of offended vanity, the pitiful vexation of a moment, a credible witness to her affections and aspirations? Was it with such ministers she took counsel on so solemn, so binding, so irrevocable a

covenant? Alas! how do we abuse the gifts with which Providence has endowed us! The very feelings designed for our happiness, the susceptibilities given for our enjoyment, are perverted into afflictions, and through their instrumentality, we involve others in the suffering we deliberately bring on ourselves. We may triumph, but it is at a cost far greater than Pyrrhus. There is a stab in our brother's heart, but if we look inward, we shall see our own robed, like the penitent of ancient times, in the grave-clothes of remorse, shrinking from the torch of conscience, as a phantom from the light of day. Better defeat than such a victory—a defeat self-inflicted, which is a victory over ourselves.

But Clara thought otherwise. She had never been taught, as a principle of republican discipline, that woman's greatest triumph is submission, that sacrifice should be the unvarying rule of her life. She forgot the unalterable decision of nature, and of nature's God, that for this cause—for love—in obedience to the overruling instinct of passion and affection—a woman shall forsake her kindred and her father's house, and shall cleave unto the one chosen. Ruth, in the land of Judah, a voluntary exile from her home, is a greater heroine than the Spartan mother. Not that woman should root from memory the sweet impress of nativity! But did the daughters of Zion forget Jerusalem, when they sat down by the waters of Babylon and wept?

Such reflections never occurred to Clara. To her, love of country, as embodied in certain arbitrary opinions, seemed the first duty, as she certainly conceived it to be the greatest. But in truth, it was now associated with other and less worthy feelings—with pique, jealousy, resentment, wounded pride. Patriotism, indeed, was the

band round her eyes, but these were the treacherous guides, who hurried her over the precipice.

And she would not pause to think ! All she loved to dwell upon was his refusal, his deliberate rejection of her request. To her, bent as she was upon it, this was like a refusal of herself ; and Wilmore took care to strengthen and foster the impression. Here was the canker that had eaten its way into her love—marring, withering, and blighting it ; here, the plague-spot of her thoughts, the monster incubus of her dreams !

But the day had now arrived which was to end this terrible conflict. With a composed look, with a firm step—but with a heart how troubled !—she approached the altar, and heard the impressive words of the solemn and imposing ceremony. She heard, and spoke, as the responses were whispered in her ear, but she neither saw nor understood—only felt as in a fearful trance, from which she would awake to horror and despair.

And now she was a wife ! They hurried her away, her hand in HIS—in her husband's, down the nave, through the admiring and applauding crowd, still looking calm and placid, but within, heart-stricken, desolate, distracted, mad ! The sumptuous chariot, which received her at the church-door, seemed a prison, a sepulchre ; with an atmosphere so oppressive, so sickening, that she could not breathe.

Wilmore let down the sash, and she bent slightly forward, eliciting a shout of gratulation from the crowd. But she neither heard the cheer, nor observed the multitude. To her eye there was only one present—one unseen but by herself—ERNEST ! and, uttering a cry, she sank back in the carriage.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RECRUITING SERGEANT.

ENGLAND, with all thy faults (and they are not a few), we love thee still ! From the furthest corners of the earth we turn to thee, like the prodigal in the far country, as to our father's house, and, in all the world, find no spot so pleasant as our own sweet isle. Well might the returned wanderer, as he touched thy shore, kneel down and kiss the blessed soil ; for it is as the cheek of our mother, and we love it with a child's fondness.

It was with some such emotions that Ernest found himself once more in the streets of London, though he was as broken in spirit, and almost as poor, as the spendthrift of the Parable. Only a year had passed since he quitted England, yet it had added an age to his experience, and made him, both in instinct and feeling, a sadder and a wiser man. His disposition, however, had undergone no change, and he was the same kind, frank, forgiving, confiding fellow, as on the morning he left Glynellan. The first great wave of trial had broken against the bark of his life, washed over his breast, and stirred him to the soul ; but the vessel, though strained, remained intact, and still laboured on its way. Perhaps it was well for him that the exigencies of his situation in some measure diverted his thoughts from the shock he had received, obliging him to devote himself assiduously to one object, the pursuit of the necessities of existence. And sad it was to reflect that all his diligence, main-

tained so steadily and perseveringly, seemed thrown away !

In despair of obtaining any other occupation, he had once more taken up that which indeed he loved best—his pen. Present subsistence being his aim, his efforts were directed, in the first instance, exclusively to the periodicals, and night and day he toiled without ceasing in the desperate task. It was the same old story of the labours of Sisyphus, ever rolling the stone up, up, only to see it fall again to the bottom. His papers were perpetually returned, but it did not occur to him, in his ignorance of magazine usages, that they were never read. He still worked on, with hope deferred, with a doubting spirit, but with unabated perseverance. Literature had thrown her iron yoke upon him, and who that has once been her slave, can ever shake off her fetters ?

Without connexion, without friends, without introductions, he had embraced a profession which, more than any other, essentially demands these accessories. What was the light of his talents, if it was hidden under the bushel of his obscurity ? What was his diligence, his energy, his daily and nightly toil, if the field which he dug with such unwearied and unremitting industry, never caught the sunny glance of a publisher ? Too late he discovered, like many another aspirant, that if there is no royal road to fortune, there is certainly one to fame.

Failure was not the severest lesson of this hard school. What most tried him was the suspense—the cruel alternations of hope and fear, invariably entailed by each new venture. When, far in the night, he sought his pillow, it was not to sleep, but to weigh again and again the chances of success, to think over different passages of the paper despatched, to view each thought, each expression, with a critic's eye, till his head ached, and his brain whirled, in

the ascendancy of the one idea. Frankenstein was not more haunted by the monster of his laboratory. If it was with him like a ghost at midnight, it dogged him like his shadow at noon, pressing itself continually upon him, in his reveries and in his walks, in solitude and in the midst of a crowd, a mania, a frenzy, a madness.

And through all this stern trial he had to endure the constant pressure of indigence, almost approaching to want. His mind could not divest itself of the conviction, suspended like a sword over his head, that if he did not succeed, there was nothing before him but starvation. He thought of Butler famishing in a garret ; of the boy Chatterton perishing by his own hand. Was he, yet in the first flush and vigour of life, to add another name to the Martyrs of Literature ?

They tell us to keep such pictures to ourselves—to draw a veil, as it were, over the blotches of life, and show only its comeliness. Ensconced in a snug chamber, with the ruddy claret at hand, the fire brightly glowing, and the curtains closely drawn, we execrate the very name of suffering, if it comes betwixt the wind and our placidity. Tell us not of our brother shivering without ; of our sister, with the infant on her drained breast, dying of hunger ; but carry us into the groves and high places of Mammon, and prophesy smooth things. This is the way to show the very age and body of the time its form and pressure. It was thus that Shakspeare taught, that Dryden sung, that Fielding drew.

But, very worthy and approved good masters, your benignant faces, shining with the ruby-glow of self-indulgence, will not light up the world ; and so long as such as you hold sway, it will be full of violence, wrong, sorrow, oppression, and crime. You are right to shut your ears to the voice of human sympathy, for it would but ruffle

the down of your dreams, and grate on the stone of your hearts. Rather say, "Soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years : take thine ease ; eat, drink, and be merry."

The wise heathen thought a good man struggling with adversity a sight worthy of the gods ; but our modern Egyptians adopt another creed, and pronounce it an abomination. Be it so ; yet we may learn, in the example of such a life, a nobler lesson than all their philosophy can teach, and though the study may cost us a pang, time spent in such a way will not be lost.

Ernest had one great essential to success in his perseverance. Failure, rejection, disappointment, again and again repeated, depressed, but did not daunt him. In the fever of suspense, in the despair of repulse, even in the awful presence of want, he still persevered. In any other calling this would have been a stepping-stone to fortune. But the open-sesame to the cave of literature (temple we cannot call it) is not perseverance, not talent, but CONNEXION.

At length, the crisis which had long stared him in the face fairly arrived. His resources, eked out by the usual means, but with unequalled care, providence, and frugality, were exhausted ; and the long, terrible, agonizing struggle must now be relinquished. He went out. He walked through the streets like one blind and deaf, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. A timid hand touched his arm, and a haggard, half-naked being, the very form and image of want, implored his charity. What bitter words rose to his lips !—rose, but found no utterance. Already the humble mite was drawn forth, and deposited, with a look of commiseration and pity, in the outstretched palm : it was his last.

Unconsciously he wandered to the Horse-Guards, an

here, for the first time, began to note the objects around. The busy crowd in the street—the mounted warriors at the gate (loadstar of every passing fair one)—the venerable old clock—the court-yard and its booted sentry—the lurking detective, in his velveteen shooting-jacket, looking the picture of simplicity and innocence—all, in turn, caught his glance, as he seemed to shake off his abstraction. But it rested longer on a knot of three or four soldiers, in different uniforms, but all equally gay, who were talking together in the gateway, and whose streaming ribbons announced a connexion with the recruiting departments. In a few minutes the party walked away ; but one of the number, a very dashing young fellow, but an extremely old soldier, presently took leave of his comrades, and sauntered carelessly back, having noticed something in Ernest's appearance that looked like business. As he passed by, he suddenly dropped his free and easy air, assumed an alert carriage, and made the military salute. Ernest was quite astounded.

"A beautiful morning, Captain," said the Sergeant.

"You are under some mistake," replied Ernest.

"Aint you in the service, then, sir?" rejoined the Sergeant, with a stare of his large spherical eyes, which told on recruits like bullets.

"No."

"You do surprise me, sir. Why, you've the very cut of an officer. Bred at Sandhurst, I suppose, sir, and looking after your commission?"

"I wish it were so."

"Then so do I, sir, and I'm glad you've got the inclination, for you've the makin' of a fine soldier, and if I'm any judge that's what nature cast you for. It's a pity you aint an officer, for I can see you've the sperit to be an honour to any corps. But as to that, even supposin'

you was to 'list—a thing I'd never recommend you, though we've got vacancies for a few choice young men—but, I say, even supposin' you was to 'list, you'd soon have the three stripes on your arm, and I'd suffer death or any other punishment if you hadn't a pair of epaulets on the first opportunity."

"I thought promotions from the ranks were of very rare occurrence," said Ernest, becoming interested.

"Quite a mistaken notion, sir," returned the Tempter, smiling at his ignorance. "As you've no thoughts of 'listin', I can tell you what I wouldn't say to every one for fear of being charged with *inviglin'*—there's every inducement now to a young man to enter the army—that is, if he wants to get on. I won't say a word of the honour of serving her Majesty, because some don't care about that—although," (and the Sergeant drew himself up) "I do. I won't brag about glory, though I'd rather part with my life than this"—and he touched the silver medal on his breast—"but the chance of rising to be an officer, perhaps a General (I could mention several who have) is, let me tell you, a very fine thing, sir."—The Sergeant produced a handsome snuff-box, and tendered Ernest a pinch.

"If I thought such a prospect was open," said Ernest, "possibly I might be induced to enlist."

"Ah ! then I've done," rejoined the Sergeant. "We'll say no more about it. No, if a young man takes the Queen's shilling from me, he takes it of his own accord, not by my persuasion. I'll never *inviggle*—not for all the smart-money in the Pay-office. But if you hadn't mentioned *that*, I could have put you on the right track. Why, there's our regiment is in India now at this present time—there's an opening for a young man ! Think of goin' into battle, and capturin' a stand of colours, or

p'rhaps a gun, and Lord Gough ridin' up, and givin' you a commission on the spot. Then your name's mentioned in the despatches—even privates are mentioned now. Why, sir, for a young man of *spirit*, more especially if he's a smart, clever fellow—such a one as you are, for instance—the army's the only place."

"I wonder you've not been made an officer yourself," remarked Ernest.

"Well," returned the Sergeant, with a merry twinkle of his eyes, "*it is curious*. But, to tell you the truth, I haven't got the advantages of some. If I was like you now, a gentleman's son—for I'm sure that's the case—I'd have been an officer long ago. In fact, I'd feel so sure of it, that if my governor was to offer to buy me a commission, I'd say 'no, let me list!' For, mind you, it's a great point for an officer to have been in the ranks; he knows then the feelings of the men, he understands his duty, and he's always the best drill in the corps."

"But the drill takes a long time to learn, does it not?"

The Sergeant scouted the idea.—"Why, what is it?" he said. "It's as easy as merry-go-one. I'd put you through your facings in a week; then, as for the evolutions, another week 'ud make you as right as ninepence. There's your manual exercise complete! The firelock's just as easy. Shoulder arms, carry arms, ground arms, reverse arms"—he did it all with his cane—"fix bayonets, make ready, present, fire! Can anything be simpler than that?"

"I confess it seems simple enough."

"Well, that's all we have to learn—that's the exercise that makes a clodhopper as straight as a ramrod, and turns a chimney-sweep into a buck. Ah! a soldier's is the life, after all. He has his grub found him, a good

house over his head, a red coat on his back, and a shilling in his pocket. When his duty's done he goes out like a gentleman, enjoys himself as he pleases, and it's his own fault if he hasn't got half a dozen girls runnin' mad about him. And they won't follow the regiment, when it marches out for exercise, with the band playin' before it, and the colours flyin' in the middle—oh, no! not in the least!"—And the Sergeant winked his eye.

"I've always had an inclination for the army," observed Ernest; "but what would most influence me just now is the possibility of raising myself, by attention and good conduct, to the rank of an officer. I'll think over what you have told me, and speak to you again about it. Can you mention any place where I could see you this afternoon?"

"Why, not exactly," replied the Sergeant, who, as an old soldier, knew that a recruit in hand was worth a regiment in the bush. "We've such a few vacancies in our corps"—it had just been decimated in India—"and so many applications, that I'm obliged to make short work of it. But I've took a fancy to you, somehow; and I'll tell you what, if you're really thinkin' about it, I'll break through my usual rule, and talk it over with you. I'm obleeged to go to the office in Duke-street; so suppose we just take a walk across the Park, and *I'll give you my advice.*"

"It's very kind of you, I'm sure," said Ernest.

"Well, it's short and sweet," returned the Sergeant, as they walked away: "it's *'list*; that's all. Let me give you the shilling—her Majesty's likeness in silver, which she orders to be presented to every recruit before he goes up to be 'tested."

"Why, you're never going to enlist," said a familiar voice—and Ernest felt a hand laid on his arm.

"Parkyns !"

"Yes ! what are you thinking about ?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the Sergeant, rather sternly ; but I must request you not to interfere between this young man and me. I beg to say——"

"Never mind," observed Ernest. "Since my friend has come up, I should like to take his opinion on the subject. If I decide on enlisting, I will meet you here again to-morrow."

And he walked off with Parkyns.

"Well, I'm jiggered !" muttered the Sergeant, looking after them. "Every bullet has its billet, and a miss is as good as a mile."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MEN OF LETTERS.

"I'm rather in a hurry," said Parkyns, as he took Ernest's arm, "for I've got an appointment, but we must have a glass together. Suppose we go into Macgregor's."

"Where's that ?" replied Ernest.

"Why, I thought everybody knew Macgregor's," answered Parkyns, with his old childish laugh. "But it's close by." And he pointed out the well-known canteen, which the broom of improvement has since swept away.

They entered, and sat down in the coffee-room.

"Now, what will you have ?" said Parkyns : "a drop of the celebrated mixture. We can't chalk it up to the G. H. R." And the laugh came again.

Ernest declined taking anything.

"That's not sociable," returned Parkyns. "*As a gentleman*, I am entitled to offer you this hospitality; and you, as a gentleman, should receive it. But what's the matter with you? You look as if you couldn't help it."

"I'm afraid I can't," said Ernest, recklessly.

"And so you were really and truly going to enlist, then?" replied Parkyns, his thoughtless nature touched by Ernest's manner. "'Pon my word, I half thought you were joking. But I am surprised such a clever fellow as you can't make a do of it."

"I've tried hard, but, to say the truth, I don't know what to turn to."

"Have you ever tried your pen?"

"Do you mean as a clerk?"

"No, as an author: that's what I'm doing."

"You!" exclaimed Ernest. And he glanced at the strange figure before him—the tall, gaunt form, the threadbare coat, the well-worn drab trousers, running half-way up to the knee, and the indented hat, which, after every allowance for the habits of the individual, left a large margin to the credit of poverty. He was, indeed, an eloquent representative of the literary hack.

"Yes, and I do pretty well, considering," said old Parr—and he looked *very* old just then.

"What are the titles of your works?"

"Oh! I haven't come to that yet. At present, I only write for the periodicals, and chiefly for the *Fashionable News*. I'm going to meet the editor now."

"The editor," said Ernest, regarding him with involuntary reverence. "Do you know him personally?"

"I'm his most intimate friend," returned Parkyns, giving free rein to his imagination: "more intimate with him than I ever was with yourself. He calls me old Parr,

and I call him Bobby ; and, in fact, I'm more the editor than he is."

"I could almost envy your success," said Ernest. "I've been writing a long time, and have never obtained the smallest encouragement."

"You *have* tried it, then, have you ! What have you been working at ?"

"The magazines."

"What interest have you there ?"

"Oh, none ! I only sent in my papers."

This was too much for old Parr. His simple, childish giggle, usually so faint, expanded into a roar, and he laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Why, I never thought you were such a griff, Glynn," he said. "Don't you know the mags are all close boroughs—at least, where they pay. There's nothing done, my boy, without a friend at court. In literature, more than in anything else, kissing goes by favour !"

"Perhaps some of my papers might have something in them, then ?"

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," answered Parkyns, with the air of a first-rate critic.

"I wish I could have your opinion," returned Ernest, anxiously. "I've got one in my pocket now, which was returned to me this morning. Will you look at it for me ?" And he produced a packet of manuscript.

"I haven't any time to spare," said Parkyns ; "but come, let's see it."

He took the manuscript, and cast his eye over the first few lines with a supercilious look, but, as he read on, the expression of his face, to Ernest's great joy, began to change. In truth, he was too good a judge not to observe, with but very little scrutiny, the quaint style, the picturesque

diction, the freshness and piquancy of thought, which characterised every sentence of the little story.

"This will do," he said, at length. "It's all your own, I suppose?"

"Oh, of course," said Ernest, a little hurt by the question. "Every word of it."

"And the fools sent it back to you—such a paper as that! Well, I'll get rid of it for you."

"My dear Parkyns, do you really think you can?"

"You wait here till I come back," answered Parkyns, thrusting the paper into his pocket.

He tossed off the remainder of his mixture, wiped his mouth with his coat-sleeve, and hurried out.

Ernest sat still a moment, all his old hopes, his old fears, kindling within him. He was once more plunged in the cauldron of suspense. Had Parkyns judged too favourably? Had he, after his old habit, overrated his influence with the editor? Was there, at last, a possibility of one of his papers being looked at? Such were the thoughts which whirled through his poor, anxious, distracted mind, stretching it anew on the cruel rack of apprehension and expectation.

The time moved at a snail's pace, or rather seemed to have come to a dead stand. He took up the newspaper, and tried to feel an interest in the events of the day. But what were the world's doings to him?—to the literary aspirant, awaiting the momentous sentence of acceptance or rejection! And with what imposing attributes did he invest the Judge, the editor of that trumpery *mélange*, with its miserable twaddle of dead-and-alive tales—an excrescence of the press, with which it had no sympathy or affinity.

At length, Parkyns returned.

"Well," said Ernest, breathlessly, "how have you succeeded?"

"He wasn't inclined to take it," answered Parkyns, "as he's so full; but I said, 'come, now, Bobby, the author's a particular friend of mine, and I give you my word, as a gentleman, it's an uncommon good thing;' so after a little parleying, as a favour to me, he accepted it."

"How can I thank you?" said Ernest, gratefully.

"Oh, never mind," returned Parkyns, carelessly. "The fact is, he wouldn't give much for it, but I thought it was better than nothing, so I made him fork out at once, and I've brought you the cash. He's given me an order for another on the same terms, if you like to write it."

"I shall be only too happy."

"Fifteen shillings is the price," pursued Parkyns, producing the money.

"Thank you, thank you," said Ernest. "You are the best friend I have in the world."

Parkyns felt a twinge in his breast at these words, knowing that, under the specious mask of friendship, he had taken care to stop five shillings for his trouble. Such are the friendships of our every-day world!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NEWSPAPER WORK.

THE first money we have ever earned with our pen! Can it be forgotten? Is it the same as other money? Or do we estimate it, in our delirium, by the hours of toil and trial and pain, the nights of fever and study, devoted to its acquisition?

Ernest clenched it in his hand as if it were the wealth of the Indies. His step, lately so faltering, now scarcely touched the ground. He hurried along the streets in a wild, tumultuous, hysteric ecstasy. But a better feeling was in his heart—a feeling of fervent, devoted thankfulness to the Giver of all good and bounty.

To work that day was impossible. His mind, like an exhausted soil, refused to yield its fruit. Nor could he divert his thoughts from the great incident of the morning. To his sanguine eye, it was the teeming branches of grapes from the Land of Promise. In imagination, he lifted up the veil of the future, and reckoned the unhatched fortunes of years to come. All difficulties, all obstacles, all fears had vanished, and, now that he was really on trial, he felt like a giant for the work. Wretched dupe! he had far better have taken the Queen's shilling from the Sergeant!

What need to follow him through the long, dreadful struggle on which he had entered—the sufferings, humiliations, privations, the heart-burnings and disappointments, the task-work and drudgery, which pave the approaches to Parnassus! Often eking out a bare subsistence, often without food, dependent from day to day on the chance of a job, yet ever working harder than the humblest stone-breaker, he saw nothing before him but penury, misery, and despair. At length, he obtained, by mere accident, an engagement as sub-editor on a weekly newspaper—one of those hash journals, which, having neither circulation nor character, endeavour to sustain a feeble existence by incorporation, as it is termed, with two or three other leviathans of the same stamp, thus adding a sprinkle of their readers to its own. The particular paper in question was a perfect cannibal in this respect, having swallowed at least half-a-dozen of its kindred, changing

its name with each morsel, till, at last, under the taking designation of *The Sovereign*, it had lost all currency. Notwithstanding its royal title, it was under the government of a triumvirate, of whom one, the most responsible of the three, filled the office of publisher ; another, collected advertisements, and the third was the nominal editor.

The journal had a sort of unacknowledged connection with half-a-dozen other small fry, which were all printed together in one of the back courts of Fleet-street, at an office known in the trade by the name of the Slushpot. This *soubriquet*, first applied by a satirical compositor, admirably typified the mode of business, which was rather peculiar, the type used for one paper serving ultimately for the whole, being transferred from one to the other in succession, so that, in fact, the news in each journal was the same, while it preserved its own set of leaders, critiques, and advertisements. Thus, by mutual accommodation—by constantly borrowing each others' vitals, these half-dozen cripples were able to hobble on together, when they would have died of inanition alone, and circulation was not of much consequence when the printing cost a mere song.

Ernest soon found, on his induction to office, that the whole getting-up, arrangement, and editing of the paper was to devolve upon him. The nominal editor, indeed, was a mere sham, never contributing the least assistance. His editing consisted in securing all the perquisites, privileges, and prerogatives, in appropriating the books and orders, in taking advantage of Ernest's necessities and inexperience to defraud him of his undeniable rights. It is scarcely credible, in an age like the present, that men can practise such tricks on even the humblest member of the press, as if they could forget, in their brief moment

of authority, that a time may come when they will be held up to public execration, or owe their escape only to the clemency, the forbearance, and the compassion of their victims.

The duties of a sub-editor, mechanical as they may seem, are at all times arduous, even when each department of the paper is separately filled, but *The Sovereign* having to supply the raw material for its five confederates, those of Ernest were especially severe. The compilation of the foreign intelligence, and the summary of debates and meetings, the selection, abridgment, and reconstruction of paragraphs, and the condensation of general news, tasks requiring so much tact, judgment, and dexterity, formed but a small part of his labours, and, in addition, he had to supply critiques on the theatres and exhibitions, reviews of books, the city article, and the leaders. In return, he received a weekly stipend, something less than the wages of a coal-porter, a portion of which, as there was an Austrian deficiency of coin, was to remain in the hands of the editor till the end of the quarter, and be paid at quarterly periods.

It was not till the close of the week, about two hours before the time of publication, that Ernest learnt, to his surprise, that he was expected to furnish the editorial articles. The intimation struck him with a panic, as the printer was already dunning for copy. But Ernest's equanimity, at first so startled, was restored in an instant. He sat down, and with his whole mind concentrated on the subject, with his ideas ranged in unbroken sequence, with his feelings and sympathies alert as his thoughts, he threw himself into the task like one determined to conquer, or fail for ever. And an inspiration was upon him! Thoughts streamed into his mind like light, words flew from his pen like fire: the apt image, the flashing

metaphor, the graphic illustration, applied with a force and address that surprised himself, followed each other with singular fluency and rapidity. Nor had he a moment to lose. Each three or four lines, as he threw them from him, were borne off by the printer's boy, whose place was immediately taken by another, impatient to seize the next instalment. And Ernest dashed on, all his energies aroused, all his faculties braced up—self-sustained, self-reliant. Not till his task drew to a close, did he begin, like a tired swimmer nearing the shore, to feel the chill of exhaustion ; but mustering all his strength, he made one grand effort, and finished. Then he sprang from his chair with a weight off his heart, but dizzy, bewildered, and understanding what it was to write against time !

The labour of one week was but a rehearsal of what was to be done in the next ; but Ernest, having once put his shoulder to the wheel, resolutely persevered, and endeavoured to raise *The Sovereign* out of the mire of its ill-repute. Nor were his exertions without effect. Gradually, though slowly, the paper began to acquire a better name ; the vein of originality in its articles was seen and recognized ; paragraphs were quoted from its columns into the provincial journals ; and the circulation, so long depressed, showed, at last, a decidedly upward tendency. But such a result could not be achieved without prolonged and unremitted efforts ; and those efforts, engrossing and exhausting every energy and faculty, were a strain that few minds could bear. Ernest's gave way. That most terrible visitation, which unhinges and dislocates the whole system—which gives a mercurial vitality to the thoughts, at the same time that, by a strange incongruence, it perverts, distorts, and confounds them : which changes the substantial marble of dome-capped temples, and gorgeous palaces—nay, the great globe itself,

into mist and shadow, making all things indeed dull, flat, stale, and unprofitable—that leprosy of the soul, Hypochondria, struck the young man down !

The dark spirit that haunted Israel's King was not more malignant, or more insidious, than that which now preyed upon Ernest. It seized on him in every place, and at any moment—in his office, in the street, at the play-house, in his bed ! He would rush from the theatre, when the house was in a roar, to muse in the grave-yard of his own imagination ; at the dead hour of night he would start from his pillow, with the hand of his invisible tormentor fastened desperately on his throat. He longed for solitude, yet dreaded to be alone. HE WAS AFRAID OF HIMSELF. And yet the mind thus distracted and afflicted, must keep at work. Where could he look for help, consolation, support ? The Tempter, ever at hand, was not slow to answer, and proffered the intoxicating cup. He must become a drunkard !

No ! there was another source of strength and of reliance—the Throne of Eternal Mercy, and here, when every other hope had failed—when every aspiration was withered and blasted, he could make his appeal in undiminished confidence. In vain rose the awful doubt, the sceptical suggestion : in this, at least he was firm as a rock. The world might pass away ; the Heavens might be changed as a vesture ; but the Great Eternal, the Framers and Sustainer of all, would remain immutable, inscrutable, everlasting.

All this support was required, in his paroxysms of despondency, to overrule the promptings of his shattered nerves. And to render him, if possible, still more wretched, he was continually haunted by the reflection that he might any moment be superseded in the editorship of the journal, and thrown out of employment.

Hence he redoubled his exertions to raise the character of the paper, which, after several fearful throes, now took a start onward, and showed a marked improvement. At length, to the surprise of the quidnuncs, one of the editorial articles was quoted by a popular member in the House of Commons, and the next morning was reprinted in several of the daily papers. This was a moment not to be lost ; and the proprietors, who were only waiting for a suitable opportunity, immediately entered into a negotiation for the sale of the paper. The "property," as it was ironically termed, had been purchased with bills, which were now coming due, and the object of the proprietors was to sell the journal, while it stood well in public estimation, at an enormous profit, and take up the bills with the proceeds. That object was accomplished ; and Ernest, through whose labour, industry, and talent the desired end had been brought about, was then informed that his services were no longer required.

Such is the fate of the unfriended man of letters ! The prey of any heartless sharper who may pounce upon him, his talents, the noblest gift of God, are bartered for a mess of pottage, and when they are used up, or the purpose in hand is achieved, he is thrown aside, like a pen worn to the stump, as altogether worthless.

But is this law ? Marry is it ! CROWNERS
QUEST LAW !

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AN ORIENTAL TRAVELLER.

IN Brazil, and other slave states, it is customary for the negroes to be brought up to some trade or handicraft, and when they have become proficient, they are let out to different traders, and their earnings paid over to their masters. A similar system exists practically in England in respect to a certain class of literary men—the negroes of literature, of whom, if it were possible to get up a meeting in their behalf at Stafford House, tales might be told as harrowing, and quite as true, as anything in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Into such a serfage the step from a broken-down newspaper was natural and easy. Ernest's reviews, though always written in great haste, had, by their tone and spirit, attracted the attention of a fashionable publisher, from whom he had received a letter of acknowledgment ; and, finding himself out of employment, it occurred to him that here was the very quarter where he would be likely to obtain a permanent engagement. Accordingly, he presented himself at the publisher's office, where, after waiting some time, he was admitted to an audience, when he made known the object of his visit.

The great house of Mr. Edge was a regular book factory ; and its clients being chiefly fashionable authors, whose literary plumes were all borrowed, nearly every book Mr. Edge published was an imposture. He traded, not on the merit, but on the social position of his authors ;

and though one or two literary names appeared occasionally in his lists, this was merely as a mask, to cover the real and secret policy of the house. It was a maxim with Edge never to buy manuscripts, while people of fashion could be found to write for nothing, as such productions, on simply being reconceived, recast, and re-written, might be converted into most profitable investments. To do this dirty work, Mr. Edge kept a couple of the literary negro class--the slaves before-mentioned, who, in the fashionable season, were engaged night and day in reading, revising, and re-writing, manuscripts, so as to put them into a presentable shape, and thus became responsible for more books than Alexandre Dumas. As the dramatist hears his sentiments repeated on the stage by the most august characters, so these two poor journeymen, labouring unobserved and unknown, had the felicity of seeing their thoughts paraded to the world as the veritable ideas of Lords, Countesses, and Honourables, and it was amusing to see how eagerly the world bought up, devoured, and applauded the spurious trash. Now and then, when the prospect of profit was more extensive, an abler hand was employed; and straightway a work was heralded forth as the production of an illustrious personage, who had never seen anything of it but the proof-sheets. Very often the would-be authors brought their manuscripts ready prepared, ashamed that even the publisher should know how little of the work was their own; and then nothing was required but to fix a striking and attractive title.

Even for this miserable employment there were so many competitors (to such a lowest deep has literature sunk!) that Ernest's advances were very coldly received by Mr. Edge—a tall, white-faced, somnolent-looking man, between thirty and forty years of age—with dull, fish-like

eyes, and a habit of blowing through his nose like a grampus, as if he had a perpetual cold : in reference to which characteristic, it had once been facetiously remarked that he was "very like a whale." Mr. Edge, after a little conversation, was about to bow Ernest out, when he happened to remember a manuscript lately submitted to him, which, as the author was not a man of fashion, though one of wealth, had been returned, as utterly beyond the publisher's craft ; and he generously suggested that Ernest should take it up as a private speculation, and if he could make anything of it, bring it to him to publish. Ernest jumped at the proposal, and having received the author's address, hastened to make an offer of his services.

Mr. Lucius Septimus Greenfield, the person of whom he was in search, was the son of an opulent India Director, and on escaping from a great public school, where he had acquired a considerable knowledge of slang, and learnt to contemn and ridicule everything honourable and great, he had gone with his family to the East, returning home anything but a Warburton. In his own estimation, however, he was quite equal to the Worthy of "The Crescent and the Cross ;" and, out of the sow's ear of his experiences, proposed to make a companion silk purse. It was rather high to soar, but the towering flight of the eagle seems as nothing to the goose.

The genius of Greenfield, so ambitious of literary distinction, was no less aspiring on certain other points, and he was especially desirous of becoming a character in the world of fashion—that social Eden, the perfumes of which were the odour of sanctity to the nostrils of Mr. Edge. In his anxiety to tread the sacred ground, he had taken an expensive lodging at the court end of the town—the first-floor over a shop, where he dissipated his ample

allowance in Hansoms, and noisy night revels, besides keeping a box at the Opera, and buying no end of trousers, all of different patterns. Here it was that Ernest found him, in an apartment hung round with hookahs, pipes six feet in length, and other trophies from the East, and redolent of the fumes of Narghili; while the young man himself, crowned with an Ottoman cap, and wearing a pair of Turkish slippers, was evidently suffering severely from a recent orgie of tobacco—a habit which, as an Eastern traveller, he felt bound to cultivate, though it by no means agreed with him.

Ernest, having presented the card of Mr. Edge, was received by the Oriental as an ambassador from a brother Pasha, and at once invited to take a pipe.

“Thank you,” he replied: “I have given up smoking.”

“Can any one give up smoking?” cried Mr. Greenfield, astounded. “I could n’t. It’s food and drink to me! Sometimes I smoke twenty of these large bowls in a day and I’d never have the pipe out of my mouth if I could help it. I’m an awful liar, but this is as true as I stand here.”

“You must be a great smoker,” observed Ernest.

“Loud—very loud, one of the loudest smokers you ever met, but in the East they’re all loud smokers. I’ve seen a little boy there, not higher than the table, smoking a hookah that reached across the street. It’s a beastly jolly place for smoking. Come, try a pipe.”

“Thank you, I beg you’ll excuse me.”

“You won’t? You need n’t fear this tobacco. It’s the best Narghili—as mild as milk, and is only made for the Pasha of Egypt. To tell you a secret, it was given to me by his favourite wife, Fatima, who fell over head and ears in love with me. I’m an awful liar, but this is as true as I stand here. That woman was so jolly sweet on me,

sir,—'pon my word, it would have touched your feelings. It was loud—very loud."

"Indeed."

"Yes. But I see you want to come to the manuscript. Your governor has changed his mind, has he?" And he put his fore-finger on the side of his nose.

"Do you allude to Mr. Edge?" asked Ernest.

"To be sure. He thinks I'm a griff, and so he's going to play off and on with me. Now, at a word, will he give six hundred?"

"I must really place you right as regards my connexion with Mr. Edge," said Ernest. "I simply heard from him that you wanted some one to put your manuscript in order, and I have come to say I shall be glad to render you any assistance I can, if you haven't engaged any one."

Mr. Greenfield, who had been imagining a stratagem on the part of Edge, very complimentary to the merits of his manuscript, was rather chop-fallen at this explanation, but his spirits immediately rallied.

"Well the fact is, I do want somebody, for I haven't time to go over it again myself. I'm writing so many things just now, and the papers are all bothering me to send them something. There's a long letter of mine in the *Times* to-day, and I've got to write articles for two crack papers this week. Besides which, I'm writing a thing in *Punch*—the Story of a Feather."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Ernest. "I thought that was Douglas Jerrold's."

Mr. Greenfield laughed.—"I set that about," he said, "I don't want anybody to know I'm writing till I bring out my travels. It's so beastly—people seeing you at parties, and pointing you out, and saying that's the man who's writing the Story of a Feather, Snob Papers, and

Jeames's Diary. I always lay them on somebody else. But do you think I shall be invited out much to parties when my travels are published?—because they'll have my name on the title-page! Do you think people will be beastly loud upon me?"

"I really can't say," replied Ernest, unable to repress a smile.

"Oh, I shall, I know. People are sure to be after me. But what are you going to do it for?—it's no use sticking it on, for I can find out what's the usual charge."

Ernest coloured at the insinuation, and ashamed of the position in which he was placed, was about to bid the Oriental good morning, when a grim recollection of his empty purse, which had just yielded up its last breath of coin, rose, like a ghost, to forbid his departure. Fine feelings, alas! are not for the poor.

"Will you allow me to look at the manuscript?" he said, without noticing the insult.

"Oh, you may look at it, certainly," replied the traveller, in his turn changing colour, "but I've told you it's in a rough state, just as I wrote it down in the desert, with the camel going at full speed. Of course, it's nothing like what I could do, if I was to sit down and write it here. But, as I said before, the other things I'm doing won't admit of that, and, besides, I'm bored with it, and what's the use of money if it won't save a man from being bored?"

"Money will do anything," said Ernest, bitterly, as he opened the manuscript, which Mr. Greenfield, still looking very red, had laid on the table. "Oh! this will never do?" he added. "I don't know what to make of this!"

"Which do you mean?" said the traveller, becoming a perfect poppy.

"Such passages as these," replied Ernest. And he read aloud—

"Pompey's pillar! What a sell! Name of Jones wrote across. Wrote 'ass' underneath, and then cut in my own name in beastly loud letters

"Thebes; another beastly sell. Old bricks and stones—mason's yard. Looked in Warburton—humbug about antiquities. Had lunch, and voted Thebes an awful beastly sell."

"Why, I thought that was a jolly game," said Mr. Greenfield, and quite equal to my Pips' Diary in *Punch*. But you can alter it if you like."

"But every page is the same."

"Then what should a fellow's book be about, if you don't put such things down?" demanded Mr. Greenfield, reverting to the poppy condition.

"You might put in descriptions of the place," replied Ernest. "That is what must be done."

"But you've never been there."

"But you have."

"Cut along," said the traveller. "I'll tell you all about it, and you take my notes, and write the book."

And thus the book was written! For a few pounds—less than half the sum which a lawyer's clerk would have charged for the mere transcription, Ernest agreed to write—it might almost be said to invent, a narrative of Mr. Greenfield's visit to the East, in two ordinary-sized volumes—only stipulating, as he received so small a remuneration, that if the work should reach a second edition he should be entitled to a further payment, proportioned in amount to the sum given for the copyright. It was also agreed that the two volumes should be completed in six weeks.

The task undertaken can only be properly compre-

hended by one who has been similarly employed ; but the labour, the drudgery, the incessant application, harassing and distressing as they were, formed its lightest features ; and Ernest was worried as much by the traveller as by his book. But all things come to an end, and, at the time appointed, the manuscript, now an entirely new composition, was consigned to the tender mercies of Mr. Edge, who, on looking it over, made an arrangement for its publication.

Mr. Lucius Septimus Greenfield, the anonymous author of the *Story of a Feather*, *Jeames's and Pips's Diaries*, the *Snob Papers*, and other notable productions, at length appeared openly in print, as the author of a book of travels in the East, to which he could lay similar claims of paternity. And the book had a run ! The great object of his ambition, of which he had been dreaming ever since he left school, was achieved ; and there was an absolute rush upon him for parties, where, clothed in Ernest's skin, he passed for a real lion. Nor was this all. His friends who had thought him a fool before, were now struck by his extraordinary talents ; though so young, he was pushed prominently forward in life, and soon placed in a position he could never have attained by his own miserable pretensions.

And what was the recompense of the man of letters—the architect of so much good fortune ? He received the first instalment of his hire ; and when the second edition of the work was called for, published, and sold, putting a handsome sum into the pocket of Mr. Greenfield, the other stipulations of the contract were repudiated, and he was cheated out of his reward.

Such is the bubble reputation, which we seek at the critic's mouth !

CHAPTER XL.

THE MYSTERIES OF LITERATURE.

BESIDES his famous ledger, Mr. Edge kept a book of smaller dimensions, known among the initiated as the "black book," perhaps in reference to its cover, but which, in a moment of convivial freedom, a wag of the establishment had designated "the book of all work," inasmuch as it contained the names and addresses of all such persons as were likely to do work under price, forming a sort of Caligula's list of victims—cheap printers, cheap engravers, cheap bookbinders, cheap translators, and, last and not least, cheap authors.

The parsimonious principle was carried out by Mr. Edge in all his arrangements. The paper-maker, insisting on a fair price, was required to supply the very cheapest paper; the printing was done in one of the suburbs by a cheap printer, who, employing only apprentices, of course did it badly; and the binder was paid at so low a rate, that the covers of the books, instead of being a good stout board, were little thicker than paper, falling off with a tumble. How the system was maintained in reference to authors has already been intimated, and it bore no less stringently on the literary *employés* of the establishment, who, though very severely tasked, received a remuneration barely sufficient for subsistence. In fact, the only thing appertaining to Mr. Edge that was not cheap, was books, and for these he demanded famine prices.

One morning, Mr. Edge was engaged in turning over

the leaves of the "black book," running his eye down each, as he came to it, with a searching glance. A hack of twenty years' standing, after labours which would have shamed Hercules, had just become blind, and Mr. Edge was under the necessity of parting with him : that is, of turning him out on the world, without any acknowledgment for his long and faithful service in the house, with himself and predecessor—to live or perish as he might. It was necessary to procure some one in his place who would be up to the work, and whose talents and appearance would reflect credit on the establishment ; and Mr. Edge's fishy eye already rested complacently on the name of Ernest Glynn.

A brief note speedily brought Ernest to his presence. From his eagerness to obtain employment, Edge, strongly endued with the faculty of seeing into a millstone, was fully aware of his necessities, and drove his bargain accordingly. It was arranged that Ernest, a gentleman, a scholar, a literary man, should give him his entire services for a salary too small to be mentioned to ears polite.

The duties exacted of Ernest for this magnificent remuneration were as onerous as they were manifold, comprising the conduct of an extensive correspondence with the clients and dependents of the house ; the examination, revision, and RE-WRITING of manuscripts ; the reading and correction of proofs ; the invention of titles ; the composition of prospectuses, prefaces, and paragraphs ; suggestions and advice on all occasions, at an instant's notice ; the management of literary negotiations, with the tact, dexterity, and *politesse* of Talleyrand ; and the reception of visitors. He was expected to be at the office early in the morning, and was sometimes detained till twelve at night.

The accession of an assistant with so much energy and industry, bent on fulfilling his duties conscientiously and well, was soon felt in an establishment where the literary staff were all underpaid, and, consequently, not much inclined for work. In a few weeks, long-accumulated arrears had disappeared, and Edge was able to dispense with the services of two more used-up hacks, whom he sent about their business in the usual way, putting the whole burden of three on Ernest, at a remuneration half less than he had previously paid to one.

But, though toiling so arduously at the office, Ernest's labours did not end here. He wisely remembered, in the bitterest moment of exhaustion, that he was at that time of life when, if ever, he must endeavour, by extraordinary and unremitted efforts, to raise and advance himself in the social scale, and, for this purpose, must sacrifice every consideration of ease, recreation, and rest. Now committed to literature, nothing remained for him, in carrying out his object, but to take up his pen, and devote the hours which should have been given to sleep to renewed diligence and study.

The staple commodity of Edge was fiction, written, in the first place, by people of fashion, and afterwards touched up, or usually entirely re-written by literary hacks. As compositions, these fashionable novels, though often puffed off as the noblest productions of the day, were below contempt, but, what was worse, they were offensive to morality and decency. Their invariable topic was either seduction or adultery, on which they rang the changes, from one chapter to another, in every form, and under every circumstance of aggravation. Aiming only to throw an interest over crime, they presented all the worst features of the French school, without its almost-redeeming talent ; while, with all their jibes at

the middle and humbler classes, they depicted life in the higher circles—and most falsely—as something only to be equalled in the destroyed Cities of the Plain.

The principle on which these productions were published, in rapid and unbroken succession, was prejudicial alike to their authors, to the public, and to the interests of literature, the only individual benefited being Mr. Edge. Thus, in many cases, the authors paid down fifty pounds towards the expenses of publication, when it was arranged that they should receive one hundred pounds on the sale of a stipulated number of copies, and one hundred pounds on the sale of a second specified number, provided such sales were effected within six months from the time of publication—one day later they were not entitled to a payment. In other cases, the agreement was the same, minus the exaction of a premium from the author.

The mischievous effect of such a mode of literary remuneration must be obvious. In the first place, the real literary man, the author by profession and genius, is almost excluded from the field, not only because he requires present payment, and cannot wait for contingencies, but because the deluge of shams poured into the market by people of rank and wealth, who strain every sinew of influence and connection to draw attention to their books, shut him out from the public ear, usurping the sphere properly and rightfully his. In the next place, such a system infallibly leads to chicanery, collusion, and fraud. As the sale approaches the number at which a payment is to be made, the first thought of the publisher, if he acts in the spirit of Mr. Edge, is how he can evade the liability ; and, to enable him to do this, he immediately takes measures, by dropping the appliances of puffing and advertising, to keep the sale such a number short of the point stipulated as will leave him his full profit, without incur-

ring the risk of the slightest payment to the author. The author's tenure of six months having expired, and his interest being terminated, the advertising is renewed, and, by this expiring effort, a few more copies 'pushed off at the full price of a guinea and a half, when the residue, disinterred from a recess in the warehouse, is sold at a shilling a volume, to a remainder bookseller, and by him dispersed among the country and suburban libraries.

Ernest was too soon familiar with these lamentable statistics. Nothing daunted, however, he set to work on a novel, descriptive of such phases of life as he had himself witnessed, and illustrating the manners and characteristics of the day. It would be easy to say that the book was finished, and, on its publication, took the town by storm ; but such triumphs, though they abound in fiction, seldom, if ever, occur on the great stage of the world. Between the conception and completion of Ernest's task lay an Alps of difficulty, which few would have attempted to surmount. Returning home late from the drudgery, fatigue, and vexations of the day, he had to flog himself up to renewed labour, taxing faculties already over-strained, till, as night advanced, mind and body alike gave way, and he would almost fall from his chair from exhaustion. When he went to bed it was to feel that light, rising, whirling sensation in the brain, which seems the forerunner of delirium, or to be startled from his troubled sleep by a horrid nightmare, or, in his anxiety to be early at work, to wake up, perhaps half a dozen times in the night, thinking it was his hour to rise. That hour was four ; and summer and winter—for this struggle was not for a day, but for a year—he rose with the same punctuality, fagging at his book till his daily duties called him to the office, where he got through his work with so much efficiency and satisfaction, that the triumviri whom he had succeeded, though

they had really been very industrious hacks, were only remembered by Edge as ingrates and impostors.

But the book was finished at last. Edge, less considerate than the slaveholders of the Western hemisphere, who allow their slaves to work, after the stated hours of labour, for their own benefit, heard of its existence with extreme dissatisfaction ; but, after raising every possible objection, was obliged, on receiving a most flattering report from an experienced reader, to arrange for its publication on the usual terms—which, precluded by his position from applying to any other house, Ernest was compelled to accept.

Who can tell what were his alternations of hope and fear, when the book, at length, made its appearance, in all the honours of tea-paper and old type, bound in a cardboard cover ! At first, indeed, it seemed that he would meet the fate common to the unknown, and fall still-born on the shelf ; but the press, as a body, is just and discriminating, superior to the petty cliques and influences which hem in our purely-literary journals, and Ernest's book was received with a consideration which its publisher deemed the exclusive due of rank and fashion. To the surprise of every one, it was found that Edge had published a novel which a woman need not blush to be seen reading ; that it was making its way without the agency of puffs and advertisements ; and that, notwithstanding this success, its author was neither an Honourable nor a Countess.

But the favour with which Ernest's tale was received, notwithstanding the neglect of the usual appliances, now became a subject of real concern to Edge, who not only had before him the disagreeable prospect of having to make a payment to an author, but also the possibility that success might even tempt Ernest to resign his engage-

ment, when, as he well knew, he would infallibly lose the services of his most efficient fag. But the means of preventing such a catastrophe were in his own hands. One of his decoy-books, the production of a deservedly popular authoress, was just ready, and this was immediately brought ought, blazoned, paraded, and pushed in every direction, fully answering the purpose contemplated. Ernest's novel was irrecoverably swamped.

He is sitting alone in his dark chamber—with the dark past, and the darker future, as there is but too much ground to consider it, vividly present to his eye. Where now are the weary hours he stole from sleep, and where their fruit?—where all the hopes, dreams, expectations, that guided and sustained his useless efforts? The bold, manly heart, which, undaunted by adversity, had so long maintained its up-standing fight with the world—even the strong frame is bowed and crushed: not by failure, but by injustice, trickery, and fraud.

A strange sensation seized upon him, as if his whole system, struck down by the sufferings of the mind, had received a simultaneous shock, paralyzing and prostrating it; and, with an instinctive foreboding, he put his handkerchief to his mouth: it was full of blood.

That blood cried to Heaven against some one, as surely as Abel's against Cain. Not for all your gains, Mr. Edge! would we have a drop of it on our souls!

CHAPTER XLI.

MRS. DE BURGH'S BOOK.

It was thought, at first, that the stream of life was ebbing completely out, but Ernest possessed a robust constitution, and in a week, the danger was past, and he was again up. The surgeon, however, insisted on a fortnight's sojourn in the country, before he could return to business ; and Edge considerably acceded to the arrangement, merely stopping his pay for the three weeks he was absent.

But we are coming on other events. Ernest, greatly benefited by the change of air, had returned to the office, when, one morning, the clerk ushered into his room a lady of fashionable appearance, who had just arrived in her own carriage (a great recommendation at the house of Edge), and, advancing before her, presented Ernest her card.

"Mrs. De Burgh," said Ernest, reading the name. "May I ask——."

"Why, yes, positively it is," cried the lady. "What an interesting fact ! How do you do ?"—And she held out her hand.

"Is it possible ?" cried Ernest, in his turn surprised. "Miss Crambo—that is, Mrs. ——."

"De Burgh, if you please," replied the quondam governess. "I have persuaded Mr. De Burgh to discard the odious corruption of Burge, and resume the ancient designation of the family. But what an unexpected pleasure this is ! And Emily will be delighted. How long have you been home from America ?"

"Oh! some time—more than a year."

"And you have never come near us!"

"Why, I thought," said Ernest, looking down, and colouring a little, as he remembered the affront he had received from Mr. Burge,—“but there's no use reverting to what is past.”

"Yes, there is," replied Mrs. De Burgh, laying her hand kindly on his arm—"when you have been wronged. I recollect now what I heard from Emily. But I will see to that—only tell me, did you, while you were in America, get made a medium?"

"Well, to say the truth——"

"To say the truth, you never troubled your head about it. You may laugh, but"—and she sunk her voice to a whisper—"I could tell you the most astonishing things. But we shall be overheard. They're all round us, everywhere; and they follow me about like a shadow. There, do you hear that tap?"

"Was there a tap?"

"Yes, but you didn't hear it, I dare say. Mr. De Burgh never hears them, though they come to the head of the bed every night; but then he's not a medium: that accounts for it. But what are you doing in this place?"

Ernest explained his position.

"And do you know what has brought me here?" asked his visitor.

"I hope it's to give the world some production of your pen."

"You're not so far out. What I have observed in reference to spiritual manifestations has induced me to turn my attention to astrology, and I have achieved great success. To prove this, it is only necessary to say that I can tell you at once you were born under Aquarius."

"But are you sure of that?"

"Yes, you're subject to rheumatism."

Ernest laughed outright.—"This is most convincing," he said, "for just as you spoke, I had a most desperate twinge. But I'm very susceptible of cold just now."

"It's the influence of the constellation," said Mrs. De Burgh. "But, to go on with my story, I've written a book on the subject, which will require a hundred years' study for any one to thoroughly understand it. Since I have seen you, I must get you to look into it before I say anything about its publication. You'll do that for me?"

"I shall be delighted."

"Thank you. You shall hear from me about it. But now I must run home, and tell them I have seen you: so good-bye."

Ernest bade her a cordial adieu, though not till he had attended her to her carriage. An hour afterwards, a footman arrived with a note, bearing a seal of enormous dimensions, representing the De Burgh arms, and, breaking it open, he found it was from Mr. De Burgh.

CHAPTER XLII.

A DINNER PARTY.

THE incident which had, in its results, converted Miss Crambo into Mrs. De Burgh was, under the circumstances, a very natural one. Emily's education being finished, the governess, regardless of the entreaties of her

pupil, and the representations of the ironmaster, insisted on taking her departure, when Mr. De Burgh had no alternative but to give up his oracle and counsellor, or persuade her to remain as his wife. It was a desperate resource, but the conjuncture was no less so ; and Mr. De Burgh, after waiting till the twelfth hour, proposed, and was accepted.

He never had reason to regret the judicious step he had taken. The influence his wife had previously exercised, with such good effect to all, now became supreme, and in consequence, he found himself an object of universal respect. At the same time, her talents and agreeable manners drew around them a distinguished circle, which, sordid as he knew the world to be, his adored money had hitherto failed to attract.

On leaving Ernest at the publisher's, Mrs. De Burgh drove straight home, and made her way to the presence of her lord.

"Who do you think I have seen?" she asked, gracefully perching herself on a chair. "You will be charmed!"

"The Marquis of Bablington, ma'am," answered Mr. De Burgh, pompously.

"No!—oh, no!"

"Lord Brookville, ma'am."

"Oh dear, no!"

"The Honourable Vincent Crane, ma'am."

"No: better even than him—young Glynn!"

"Oh, indeed! He's come to town, then? I thought he'd soon be up after us. His eye is on a certain person, ma'am—take my word for it; and a very desirable connection he is. The Glynn's are proud, ma'am, and rich, too; but Mr. Wordley knows the value of capital. Money gets money. Yes, Mr. Wordley Glynn is a very

excellent man, and will be worth a considerable sum at his uncle's death."

"I was not thinking of him. It's his cousin I've seen—Ernest Glynn!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Burgh, his face extending to an unnatural length. "That young vagabond—a miserable, houseless, poverty-stricken fellow, cast off by his uncle, ma'am—completely. He'll come to no good, ma'am, that scapegrace: not worth a farthing, I assure you."

"My dear sir, you are quite mistaken in your estimate of this young man," said the lady, placidly. "As to his poverty, I'm afraid it is not to be disputed, but he has talents, decided talents, and in the present day, they are preferred—it is hardly credible, but it is true—preferred in certain quarters, to money."

"Impossible, ma'am!"

"I assure you, it is the case, not only because talent is more appreciated than formerly, but because the example of the Court has made it fashionable."

"Then, do you mean to say, ma'am, that money is losing its weight in the social scale?" asked Mr. De Burgh, with the air of an injured man.

"Mere money is, undoubtedly; but it has the power of making up for this, by surrounding itself with extraneous attractions. Wealth can still do much."

"Of course, ma'am. It's a fine thing, a wonderful thing!"

"No doubt it is, when properly used, that is, as you use it."—Mr. De Burgh drew himself up.—"You show your own judgment and discrimination," continued his wife, "by throwing open your house to every one who can present the introduction of merit, and you are visited, and courted by the noble of the land, because they find

here so many who are distinguished in literature, science, and art."

"You're a woman of very great feelings, ma'am," said Mr. De Burgh, approvingly.

"As to this young man," pursued Mrs. De Burgh, "you should by all means take him up, both on account of his connection with literature—for that is the profession he follows—and also as he is a Glynn. I know what you would say—that this might offend his uncle. But, my dear sir, what have you just very truly remarked—that the Glynnns are proud. Well, you must be proud, too : you must be independent. Mr. Glynn can't openly show offence at your evincing kindness for his nephew, and you gain golden opinions from all sorts of persons, by countenancing an unfriended young man, when, to all appearance, local interests should have led you to slight and repel him. Be assured, it will make some talk in the country, when people hear one of these proud Glynnns is a *protégé* of Mr. De Burgh's."

"Ma'am," said Mr. De Burgh, unable to resist this logic, "your feelings are astonishing."

And, under his wife's direction, he sat down and wrote a polite note to Ernest, apologising for his abruptness at their last meeting, when he happened to be labouring under great irritation, and requesting the favour of his company to dinner on the following day.

Ernest arrived a little before the appointed time, and was shown into the ante-room, where Emily, for a wonder very early that day, was awaiting him.

The girl he had left a budding beauty was now a woman, in the first flower of her life ; and Ernest saw, at a glance, that nothing remained of her former shyness, except such a shade as added piquancy to her charms. It

was the soft, sweet violet, peeping out from the veil of its own modesty, yet with a look so bright, with a smile so radiant, that the veil was not seen. And, through veil and smile and look, shone, like the violet's breast, the clear, fresh innocence of her mind.

"I am so glad to see you," she said, joyously, as they shook hands. "We have so often talked about you, and wondered when you would come back."

"You thought I should come back some day, then?" said Ernest, happier than he had felt for a long time.

"Oh, of course. The prince in the fairy tale came back, you know ; and you set out on his principles."

"But he succeeded, and, judging from the fortune he made, must have gone to California, instead of New York. Besides which, he always had a fairy to look after him."

"And you might have had a spirit, if you had taken mamma's advice, and been made a medium. But she says you never troubled about it."

"Why, I believe, I'm out of the pale, as I've no faith."

"You're as bad as I, then ; and she calls me a Turk. But how did you like America ?"

"It's an extraordinary country, but more for the future than the present. Everything on the grandest scale—mountains, forests, rivers, and Niagara."

"Niagara must be sublime, yet how awful ! I hardly know whether I should like to see it. And what did you think of the people ?"

"They are brave, intelligent, persevering, and industrious ; but the character of the nation is not yet formed. It will take a hundred years to bring all its elements into one mould."

"Just the time required to understand mamma's book, though I am sure I should n't understand it myself in a

thousand. I hope it will be easier to you ; for she says you are going to read it."

"She has promised me that pleasure. But here is Mrs. De Burgh." And the host and hostess entered together, just as several guests were ushered in. Mr. De Burgh, carrying out the suggestions of his wife, received Ernest with the greatest cordiality, presenting him to the circle as Mr. Ernest Glynn, of Glynellan, and nothing could exceed the courtesy and urbanity of the hostess, who, for the time, forgot even her philosophy, in her attention and consideration for her guests.

Ernest obtained from Emily some notion of the character of the assembled company, of which the most important, as well as most agreeable person, was the Honourable Vincent Crane, a man of some literary taste, who, in compliment to his rank, was also considered a wit, and enjoyed an enviable popularity among literary and scientific men, for whose society he evinced an amiable preference. Next in consequence was Mr. Griffin, the member for Pinchborough, who was ambitious of an opportunity of bringing forward a motion in the House for raising a *r  venue* from gas, but whenever he rose for this purpose, was always counted out. The Starchleys, "a talented family," who were always singing each other's praises, and a despondent-looking gentleman in a Byron collar, who wrote verses in albums, and called himself a poet, completed the party. One other guest, however, was still expected, and Mr. De Burgh's repeated references to his watch, showed that he was considerably behind time.

"The reviewer is very late," observed Mrs. De Burgh, aside. "By the way, Mr. Glynn, he's a person you ought to know : all literary people should know each other."

"I shall be most happy to make the acquaintance of any friend of yours," replied Ernest.

"This is a friend of Vincent Crane's, who introduced him to us," returned Mrs. De Burgh. "Mr. Crane knows every one, and every one knows him."

"And every one likes him, too," said Emily.

"Mrs. De Burgh, ma'am, do you think he'll come?" asked Mr. De Burgh, *sotto voce*.

"I think so," was the reply. "But as a literary man he is entitled to some indulgence. It's scarcely possible he can have forgotten it. Doctor Johnson, who was also a great reviewer, was very absent, but I never heard of his forgetting an invitation to dinner."

At this moment the servant announced Mr. Shakespeare Parkyns.

Ernest, whose eye was watching for the new comer, gave as tart, as he recognized the well-known figure of Old Parr, dressed in a span-new suit of black, which, from its style and fit, had the appearance of having been fabricated at a certain noted establishment of Oriental origin.

The reviewer made his devoir with a majesty which astounded Ernest, and produced a profound impression on the other guests, particularly the poet, who was observed to turn pale.

"Pray, Mr Parkyns," said Mrs. De Burgh, "let me introduce to you a fellow-labourer in the great field—Mr. Ernest Glynn."

"Glynn, my—my dear sir," cried Parkyns, just escaping the more familiar salutation of "boy," which was on his lips. "How do you do?"

"You know each other, then!" exclaimed Mrs. De Burgh, as they shook hands. "This is a most delightful fact!"

Dinner was announced; and Ernest, who had been hoping to take charge of Emily, was, to his great chagrin,

paired off with Miss Letitia Starchley, through the dexterous management of Mr. De Burgh, who, while showing his guest every attention, kept a Shylock watch over his daughter.

"That's my brother sitting next to you," said Letitia, as she finished her soup; "he's *so* clever—such a talented young man! We're all so proud of him."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ernest.

"Yes; he has such a genius for mathematics; it's quite astonishing. He won a scholarship at Oxford for his mastery of Euclid, and he's now going in for Senior Wrangler. We look forward to his success as certain."

"That will be a high distinction."

"Yes; but it's extraordinary how hard he has to work for it—how he applies himself to it. He's as diligent as he is clever. We hope the greatest things of Bacon—that's his name. He's called after the great philosopher."

"Tish is talking about me, I know," observed Bacon, whose ear had caught the sweet sounds. "If she tells tales out of school, I shall inform against her."

"Now, don't, Bacon," urged Letitia.

"Why not?" said Bacon. "You ought to be proud of it! I'm sure I should be, if I could write verses like you. I should like you to see some of her poetry, sir. I assure you it's far superior to Tennyson's; but Tish is such a modest little thing, she won't have it published."

"Because I know it isn't so good as you think," said Letitia, smirking.

"Come, Tish, dear, I won't have you say that either," cried her mamma, across the table. "Your uncle, who is a very good judge, said it reminded him of Wordsworth; and I think that is high praise—don't you, sir?"—to Parkyns.

It so happened that Parkyns had a crotchet on the subject of Wordsworth, whose poems, of course, he had never read.

"Wordsworth's a mere rhymester, madam," he replied. "His poetry is all one sing-song—words, words, words."

"Still we must take them for *words' worth*," observed the Honourable Vincent.—And all laughed at the simple joke.

"I take them for sound and fury, signifying nothing," answered Parkyns.

"There spoke the reviewer!" said Mrs. De Burgh. "You critics may be just to authors, but you are very severe."

"It's our vocation," answered Parkyns.

"Parkyns *shakes spears* at them," said the Honourable Vincent, eliciting another laugh.

"And do you never feel any qualms of tenderness, Mr. Parkyns?" asked Mrs. De Burgh.

"Never, ma'am. When I sit down to review a book, I am no longer Shakespeare Parkyns—I am no longer human—I become an ogre, a ghoul."

The dinner went on—Parkyns, by his bold assertions and impudence, carrying all before him, so that even the Starchleys were fain to hide their diminished heads, while the gentleman in the Byron collar never opened his mouth, except for the purpose of swallowing, at one and the same time, some good thing from his plate, and from the Honourable Vincent, or some terribly severe remark from Parkyns, whom, in the ardour of his imagination, he evidently regarded as a being who would grind his or any other poet's bones to make his bread.

The ladies having withdrawn, the gentlemen, on the suggestion of the Honourable Vincent, closed their ranks.

"A decided improvement lighting this room with gas,"

observed Mr. Griffin, the member, taking advantage of a moment's pause. "It is impossible to estimate the advantages to be derived from gas, in its applicability to domestic purposes, if people would only be prevailed upon to use it ; and, on the other hand, it might be made an important element in political economy."

"From your remarks, I should imagine the subject is at once luminous and voluminous," answered the Honourable Vincent, with his usual success.

"It is soon seen, sir," returned Mr. Griffin. "What are your figures ? Let us take the population of England and Wales at fifteen millions—that gives us five millions of adults, or, we will say in round numbers, four million and a half of burners. There you have your raw material, and say a tax—"

"No, pray don't," urged the Honourable.

"You may conceive, perhaps, that so much gas cannot be produced," replied the other. "But this will be easy enough, when you've raised your capital."

"Very good indeed, sir," cried Mr. De Burgh. "Capital is a great agent, no doubt—a very powerful agent. In fact it's—"

"A capital thing !" struck in the pertinacious Vincent, setting the table in a roar, to the great discomfiture of Mr. De Burgh, who, deprived of his favourite theme, had no more to say.

Coffee having been served, Ernest was glad to proceed to the drawing-room, where, despite the vigilance of Mr. De Burgh, he found a seat by the side of Emily.

"We have only just discovered you are an author," said Emily. "Mamma has accidentally stumbled on an advertisement of your book. Why didn't you tell us of it ?"

"It was not successful," answered Ernest ; "and I hope to do something better."

"But this must be good too, I'm sure ; and I'm quite impatient to read it."

"I shall scold you for not telling me of this !" said Mrs. De Burgh, coming up with the Honourable Vincent—"Such an interesting fact !"

"It is painful to confess we have failed," replied Ernest, with a deprecatory smile.

"'Tis not in mortals to command success, my young friend," observed the Honourable Vincent ; "but you will do more. I can see it in your face."

"And I'm sure you're a very good judge," said Emily, "and a very kind one, too. Yet I'm afraid you've been saying something ill-natured to Letitia Starchley. I saw you speaking to her just now, and she looked very vexed."

"I can't help it ; she was so much on her old strain about her brother, and I merely observed that I didn't like *battered Bacon*."

"You cruel man ! If you're so severe, I shall set you down for a reviewer."

Here Ernest, who was listening so eagerly to the old familiar voice, was seized by Parkyns.

"My dear boy, one word," said the reviewer. "I've only just heard that book was yours. I ought to have known the name, but, confound it, there are so many Glynns, and I never dreamt of you. Will you forgive me ?"

"For what ?"

"For writing an abusive and unjust review of it in the '*Sewer*.' It went against my grain at the time, but I wrote it to order."

"You. Why, I thought it was written by Flam, the bookseller."

"He ! psha ! he can't write half a dozen words. The reviews are given out as his, but they are written by me."

"Then, is this, too, a sham ?"

"A most complete sham."

"Why our whole literary system seems to be——"

"A sell," interpellated Parkyns.

"A fraud," said Ernest, indignantly.

"A swindle," said Parkyns.

It was indeed so. But the voice so near, those long-lost but never-forgotten tones, soothed the honest resentment swelling in Ernest's breast, carrying him back to other days—days of innocence, of bright anticipation, of happy ignorance of the world and its ways. They even seemed to seize his feelings at that moment, and to tell him, in accents almost reproachful, that if his present mode of life did, as he alleged, connect him with a system of deception—though his bread depended upon it, he should throw it from him, trample it under foot, rather perish than submit to it. And as the thought settled in his mind, he felt himself a changed man, relieved of a weight of depression, of despair—he almost feared, of GUILT ! Already the yoke of Edge was off his neck, and he was once more virtuous and free.

As he passed down the stairs, on his way out, a bright form leant over the balustrade above, and, unseen, watched his descent. He mechanically looked up as he reached the hall ; a fairy hand was waved ; and with a new lustre in his eyes, a new vigour in his mind, a new life in his heart, he reached the street.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE FICKLENESS OF FORTUNE.

THE eventful step was taken. A note from Ernest, resigning his post, but undertaking to complete all matters then in his hands, carried dismay to the heart (no ! the scheming brains) of Edge. The worm he had thought to tread upon was Talent—and it had turned.

Nor was Ernest's situation long a precarious one. A friend, hearing of his emancipation, put him in the way of procuring an engagement on an influential journal, where his ability and industry were immediately appreciated and handsomely rewarded, while he had the satisfaction of seeing himself in the proud position of a gentleman of the press.

He had paid several visits to the De Burghs, but, through the dexterity of Shylock, had never enjoyed a *tête-à-tête* with Emily, when one morning, calling rather earlier, he found her in the drawing-room alone.

"I've just finished your book," she said, as he sat down. "I must tell you, I couldn't go to sleep last night for thinking of it."

"You'll make me sorry I have written it, if that is the case," replied Ernest.

"If you wished it to act as an opiate, you shouldn't have made it so interesting."

"Perhaps you would have recommended a larger infusion of dialogue, then, or a scruple or two more of sentiment?"

"I should decidedly have recommended another volume, of exactly the same ingredients, and the same proportions. But how strange it is, to look back a few years, and think what you must have seen since, to be able to write such a story?"

"The book of my life is a far stranger tale," said Ernest, with a touch of sadness.

"And have you really met such people—such, for instance, as that beautiful creature Violet?"—And she raised her eyes timidly to his face, with a half-averted glance.

"Well, I have seen some one like her."

"And did she love Everard, and he her, as you have described? And is—is she dead?" asked Emily, eagerly.

"You want me to tell you all the mysteries."

"Of course."

"Then, I have only to say this part of the story is a pure invention."

"I'm very glad to hear it," said Emily, her face confirming her words.

"And why, pray?"

"Because I should have been so sorry for her to have loved so, and then to have died. Why did you make her die?"

"The reason is obvious. If she had lived, she would have married Everard, and then they would have been happy."

"That's the very reason why you should have allowed her to live, you cruel man. But I do believe authors are as vindictive in their way as critics. To think of killing poor Violet!"

"It was unavoidable, as she was in love, and you know what Shakespeare says—the course of true love never did run smooth."

"It must have been Shakespeare Parkyns who said that ; for the poet himself has made most of his heroines happy at last. Are you going to teach us that love makes people miserable ?"

"No, but it may make *some* miserable," replied Ernest.

"What a pity !" said Emily, with a sigh, as she observed a cloud on his face, though it instantly disappeared. "This would show our best feelings to be the sport of circumstances, so that we may be wrecked on the very shore we have strained every nerve to attain."

"But, after all, we may gain the heights overhead, and find they are the spot, above all others, where we would wish to be," replied Ernest.

And from his tone, from the altered expression of his features, and a sort of subdued cheerfulness in his manner, one might have thought that he was telling his own history. Had he, then, after being dashed against the rocks of disappointment by the resistless surges of feeling, succeeded in reaching the pleasant uplands ? Was the long night of his misery receding before another dawn ? Could the soul, struck by the lightning of despair, again put forth the tender buds of hope ?

Why not ? If the flower blooms but once, the gentle rain, the soft and soothing air, the gladdening heat, by their united ministrations, give new life to the stem, and stud its restored mantle with fresh blossoms. Is human feeling less susceptible, less fruitful ? Time, the truest Sibyl, happily teaches a far other conclusion.

The first wild ecstasy of love, with its intoxication, its delirium, its frenzy, may be known but once, as we can but once know the vigour, the buoyancy, the trustfulness of youth. Let us but eat of the tree of passion, and our innocence, like, Eve's, is gone. But, even when we are

driven from Eden, nature still leaves us, in the wide world of our mind, the same sensibilities, the same emotions, though they no longer spring forth untilled. We must emerge from the gloomy cavern of our meditations—perhaps our remorse, and come into the light and sunshine. Happiness is a coy maiden ; she will not, like bolder nymphs, go seeking for suitors, but requires that they should seek her.

Ernest had awoke from his long and awful sleep, in which his heart and feelings had been as dead, while his body, the mere husk of clay, had retained all its vigour. The fresh, sweet innocence of Emily's thoughts communicated a new vitality to his own ; the spell of her beauty fell upon him like a divine emanation ; her gentleness, her docility, her constant abnegation of self, shown by a thousand little accidents, won upon him with the stealth and the potency of magic. He found himself thinking of her more and more frequently—not as a goddess, not as he had thought of Clara, but as a being designed to shed peace, and joy, and love on all around her. And when he turned back to the period of their first intercourse—a period he had then thought so full of trouble, in connexion with the irritability and fretfulness of his uncle, but which he now looked upon as by far the happiest in his chequered life—she seemed to recur to him as his first inspiration to ambition and exertion, his first impression of womanly beauty, virtue, and truth.

Of those days they both spoke with an equal degree of pleasure ; and Ernest, though he shrank from any direct inquiry, contrived to ascertain from Emily that his uncle remained in much the same state of health, occasionally appearing abroad, but never mingling in society, while all his affairs, if report spoke truly, were managed entirely

by Wordley. And Ernest thought he observed a strange hesitation in Emily's manner, whenever she mentioned Wordley's name.

Mr. De Burgh, after several days' unremitted watching, suddenly relieved Ernest from surveillance, and absented himself from the house for a whole week, on business which appeared to occasion him intense anxiety. On his return, this, instead of being diminished, had evidently taken deeper root, and he evinced such abstraction and perturbation in his manner, that it even attracted the attention of the servants. At the same time it became generally known that he had sustained an enormous loss by the collapse of a railway scheme, for the entire liabilities of which, it was said, he was held responsible. A reduction in his establishment followed; but from his still maintaining a large expenditure, it began to be believed that, after all, he had received only a severe pinch.

The family had just finished breakfast, a morning or two subsequent to these incidents, when Mr. De Burgh found an excuse for hurrying Emily from the room, and then handed Mrs. De Burgh a letter he had just received.

"From Wordley Glynn!" said Mrs. De Burgh, running her eye over the contents.

"Yes, ma'am," answered her spouse; "and you see the tenor of it. He will be in town this morning, he says, and will call here, when he hopes he may have a conversation with me on a subject connected with his happiness. This admits of but one interpretation. He is going to propose for my daughter."

"Humph!" said Mrs. De Burgh, meditatively.

"The proposal is a most desirable one," pursued Mr. De Burgh, "for I fear this railway affair will turn out even worse than we expected; and in that case we shall have to put down our establishment, and go abroad for a

time. I should like to see my daughter settled, ma'am, before it comes to that."

"Let us hope it will never come to that," replied Mrs. De Burgh, cheerfully. "The Indiaman will retrieve all your losses."

Mr. De Burgh ground his teeth.—"I beg you won't refer to the Indiaman, if you please, ma'am," he said, snappishly.

"Certainly not, if such is your wish. I only mentioned it as something encouraging."

"It's very *discouraging* ma'am—most decidedly so."

"What, the Indiaman, for which you are the under-writer?"

"Yes, ma'am—that Indiaman—that rascally barge of an Indiaman, on which I have ventured my whole fortune, that Indiaman, ma'am—you won't believe it—no one would believe there ever was such a tub on the sea—ought to have arrived at Liverpool a month ago."—And Mr. De Burgh thumped his fist on the table.

"Is that all?" rejoined his wife, in the tone which woman's voice knows so well how to assume, when every other is desponding. "A month is nothing, considering the length of the voyage, the frequency of calms on the equator, the variableness of the winds"—and Mrs. De Burgh was strongly tempted to enlarge on this subject, but checked herself—"two months hence, my dear Mr. De Burgh, would be quite time enough to be uneasy. But I hope before then your ship will be safe in harbour."

Mr. De Burgh felt exhilarated by such a cheerful prospect. "Ma'am, you're a woman of most astonishing feelings," he said. "There's great advantage derived from talking to a person with your feelings, ma'am."

"I only wish you not to meet evil half way; though,

under the circumstances, I think it would be well to make some further reduction in our expenses, which we might easily do without attracting much notice."

"Well, not just at present, ma'am," returned the proud man. "The world is looking very hard at us now, just as you look at a gnat on a microscope. No, stop till my daughter is settled, and then we'll go to work effectually."

"But have you given Emily any hint on this subject? Do you think it is likely to accord with her feelings?"

"Her feelings, ma'am?"

"Yes!"

"Hang her feelings, ma'am! Not," added Mr. De Burgh, recollecting himself, "but what feelings are very good things in their way. I respect feelings; I admire and honour them. But this is a question of marriage—of fortune—in fact, of money. When it comes to that, ma'am — feelings or money? — then I say, money, money!"

"I see you have made up your mind," returned his wife, "and therefore it would be useless to discuss the subject. But I imagine there are more difficulties in the way than you suppose."

"On the part of my daughter, ma'am?"

"Yes."

"Why, what does she want, ma'am? What can she expect? Here's a most excellent man—a man of wealth, or will be when he comes into his uncle's estate, and from whom I shall take care to secure a most handsome settlement for her. Tell her that, will you? And I'll give her whatever she likes myself, ma'am. Tell her that. Just remind her that it's simply a question of money—and connexion too. Don't forget that. Why, ma'am, as

Mrs. Wordley Glynn she'll be the first person in the county."

"I shall endeavour to reconcile her to your wishes."

"Very well, ma'am. After I have seen him, he'll perhaps wish to see my daughter; but you needn't leave them alone to-day. There will be time enough for that."

And with these words Mr. De Burgh quitted the room.

The lady sat still for a short time, absorbed in reflection. Then, ringing the bell, she directed a servant to request Miss Emily to come to her in her boudoir, and went there to meet her.

"Come and sit down by me, Em dear," she said, as her step-daughter appeared. "I have something very important to say to you."

"*Very* important, mamma?" replied Emily, twining her arm round her neck, and gazing affectionately in her face. "What can that be?"

Mrs. De Burgh passed her hand caressingly over the young girl's long silken hair, but with a look so different from what she usually wore, that Emily felt at once an instinctive foreboding of something sad.

"Dear mamma, why are you so dejected?" she said. "What has happened to distress you? Pray tell me, for I can't bear to see you so sorrowful."

"Sorrow is inherent to our condition, my child—a universal law of our existence. As such, I am always prepared for it, just"—and she involuntary recurred to a scientific illustration—"just as I am prepared to see the planets sweep round the sun. Sorrow is the gravitating principle in our nature, which ties and fixes us to the earth and to each other. Let us regard it as a necessity, and we shall learn to bear it like philosophers."

"You know I can never be a philosopher, mamma ; but——"

"You are a Christian, Emmy ; and, compared with the philosophy of Christianity, my dear, all other is foolishness. That alone teaches us how to live—not for ourselves only, but for our fellow-creatures and for God ; and you will remember Addison's last words to his pupil—'I have sent for you to see how a Christian can die.'"

"I remember them well, dear mamma."

"And what are a Christian's first moral duties ?—self-denial and self-sacrifice. These we are constantly required to keep in view, and to practise : these are the distinctive characteristics of our religion, as they ought to be of our philosophy. That you know, Emmy."

"Yes," was the scarcely audible reply.

"And you are prepared to do it—to declare, by your conduct, that you don't live for yourself alone, but that you will sacrifice yourself, do violence to your own dearest wishes, if your father, your duty, requires it ?"

"Oh ! what do you ask of me ?" cried Emily, with a flood of tears.

"I ask you to do your duty—to do what I should have done myself at your age—what I did do, in a different way. I have never told you, Emmy, that I was once in love—that I loved one whom I thought honourable and worthy—who, in appearance, possessed everything our weak hearts covet, and that I loved him to madness. But I found he was but a poor painted worm. Duty commanded me to pluck him from my heart, and I obeyed."

"Poor, dear mamma !"

"I needn't tell you what that sacrifice cost me !" pursued Mrs. De Burgh, with a brave look, though her voice trembled. "At first, I suffered indeed ; but, my dearest Emmy, the mind may always find consolation—first, in

religion, and then in the exercise of its own faculties, in the contemplation of the mighty works of Creation, in the beautiful arcana of science. These have been life and breath to me : they have often enabled me to shake off my mantle of clay, which pressed upon me so heavily ; and stand before the majesty of nature in my untrammelled spirit."

"But I can't do like you, mamma. How can I, without your talents, your diligence, your perseverance ? And what is learning, even if I obtained it, when peace and happiness are gone ?"

"Peace and happiness are shadows. We are continually chasing them, but they are always at the same distance. Learning is a reality, because it belongs not to the body, but to the mind, and I have looked in and communed with it, when the whole world has seemed a blank. You may do the same. Your papa is going to exact such a sacrifice from you. You know what losses he has sustained ; and more, perhaps, are yet to come—more than I dare think of. Yet, in the midst of his trouble, he has thought of you, and desires to see you settled eligibly in life. There is but one course for you to follow : you must entirely comply with his wishes."

"You haven't told me what it is, mamma," said Emily, in a choking voice—"and don't, don't tell me now. Let me think first—think of all you have said, of all you require of me."

"Bless you, my child !" said Mrs. De Burgh, pressing her to her bosom. "You will do your duty, and may God give you strength to bear your burden."

And with these words she left the apartment.

As she was passing her husband's room, on her way down stairs, Mr. De Burgh was just coming out ; but seeing her, he drew back, and requested her to enter.

"Have you been speaking to my daughter, ma'am?" he asked, rather anxiously.

"Yes," was the reply.

"And have you told her of Wordley Glynn's note, ma'am?"

"To do that in the present stage of the affair would be premature; but I have been preparing her mind for some such step, and indeed, she appears to have an inkling of it herself."

"I'm glad of it, ma'am: it shows there's some foundation—something to go upon. But how does she seem to take it?"

"She is so docile, and so good, that I don't apprehend any serious opposition. But—"

"But what, ma'am?"

"We must proceed cautiously and gently—very gently."—And Mrs. De Burgh's voice faltered a little.

"Certainly, ma'am—certainly: such is my wish, and I leave it all in your hands. I can't do better than be guided by a woman of your extraordinary feelings. Yet there is one point I had almost forgotten to mention."

"What is that?"

"Well, it's the other Glynn, ma'am—the young man. I am aware of the interest you take in him; and I respect you for it. But I've heard lately the reason of his dismissal from Glynellan, and what do you think it was, ma'am?"—And Mr. De Burgh lowered his voice as he communicated the charge.

"I don't believe it," said Mrs. De Burgh.

"His uncle believed it, ma'am, and he not only discarded him in consequence, but packed off the girl's father too."

"Still I don't believe it; for I have heard quite

another version of the story from the schoolmistress at Bydvil. Some one has poisoned his uncle's mind against him, but, under present circumstances, we needn't conjecture who it is."—And there was something of significance in her tone.—"Enough, we have no reason to doubt his innocence."

"But I've had my eye on the young man, ma'am, and I've observed he is very attentive to my daughter."—A shade passed over Mrs. De Burgh's face.—"I've observed she has shown a sort of—a sort of a fancy, ma'am, towards him; and I think it is time to put a stop to such proceedings, and decline his further acquaintance."

"That is the very way to bring about what you fear, if such a disposition exists—which I confess I have never thought of. No, your daughter may now be brought to accede to your wishes, and you should let well alone. If you adopt this violent step, you may alarm her, and so defeat your own object."

"But if the young man takes advantage of his visits here, ma'am—and makes love to her—perhaps carries her off!"

"He won't do anything of the kind."

"I don't know, ma'am. He knows she'll have a large fortune, and to a poor man, money is a great temptation."

"To the poor and the rich too," said Mrs. De Burgh, somewhat bitterly. "But I will be responsible for Ernest Glynn. He will never propose to your daughter, while he is a guest in this house, till he has first spoken to you or to me."

"If you think so," began Mr. De Burgh—"but no!" he added, stopping short, "if he continues to come here, he will constantly be brought in contact with his cousin. That can't be."

"It must be, Mr. De Burgh," answered his wife.

"Have you not already seen the importance of following my advice in this matter? Yet now, at a moment when you say the world is watching you so closely, you propose to take a directly opposite course. What would people say then?—naturally that you were so anxious to catch his cousin, you forbade the unfriended young man your house, and they would seek for an explanation of this conduct in your recent losses. No, you must never give them such a handle as that."

"Never, ma'am—not for a thousand pounds!" exclaimed Mr. De Burgh, vehemently.

"But what you have said respecting a probable attachment between your daughter and Ernest Glynn puts the whole question in a new light," pursued Mrs. De Burgh. "We are reflective beings, my dear Mr. De Burgh, but we are, to a certain extent, also beings of impulse—subject to certain instincts and sympathies over which we have little, if any control. They are laws of nature, and her laws can never be violated with impunity. If Ernest Glynn loves your daughter, and she loves him, this new contract must not be proceeded with."

"Not proceeded with, ma'am! Why not?"

"Because it is an outrage on nature, and, therefore, can only end in misery."

"If these are your feelings, ma'am, I despise them," cried Mr. De Burgh: "yes!"—But his soul quailed as he raised his eyes to her face—the face he had looked up to so long as the bright, particular star which led him safely up the hill of the world's opinion:—"that is, ma'am, I should despise them if they were any one else's feelings," he continued, "but, as yours, I can only say I'm astonished at them—astonished."

Mrs. De Burgh inclined her head with a dignity not lost on the proud, but dependent man.

"Let me tell you, ma'am," he resumed, "I'm determined on this match. Till it is accomplished I shall know no peace, no rest. I will proceed gently, as you advise ; I will continue to receive this young man, as you desire ; but my fixed purpose is, that my daughter shall marry his cousin ; and from this no power on earth shall turn me."

"I hear you, sir," returned Mrs. De Burgh.

As she spoke, a servant entered and presented a card.

"Mr. Wordley Glynn has arrived, ma'am," said Mr. De Burgh. "As soon as I have seen him, I will bring him to you in the drawing-room."—And he proceeded down stairs.

Mrs. De Burgh had been seated in the drawing-room but a few minutes, in expectation of the unwelcome visitor, when she was joined, not by Wordley Glynn, but by Ernest.

"Whom do you think I am expecting?" said Mrs. De Burgh, after inviting him to a seat.

"I can't imagine !"

"Your cousin Wordley. He is now engaged with Mr. De Burgh in the library, and will be here directly."

"Then I had better go."

"That doesn't at all follow. On the contrary, as you will have to meet him here some day, you had better do it at once ; for we're likely to see a great deal of him."—And her last words were uttered with a gravity that did not escape Ernest.

"I will stay by all means, as you advise it," he replied in an altered tone, and gazing very fixedly at the carpet.

"I will only ask you to remain till he comes in, that he may just see you visit us. But since we have touched on the subject of your family, my dear young friend," re-

sumed Mrs. De Burgh, after a pause, "I will venture to ask you one question, which you may answer or not, as you please. Have you ever sought a reconciliation with Mr. Glynn?"

"I can have no objection to telling you frankly I never have."

"And why haven't you?"

"Because he has treated me with so much injustice, although I did nothing to provoke it."

"Then he must have acted under some delusion, and you have only to furnish an explanation, to restore yourself to his good opinion."

"That explanation he scoffed at—nay, refused to hear," said Ernest, his face kindling with indignation, as he recalled, only too distinctly, the insulting terms used by his uncle.

"At the moment he might be too incensed to listen to you, perhaps," replied Mrs. De Burgh; "but how do you know what influences had been brought into play to prepossess him against you—what circumstances had been adduced to pervert your actions, and to make your guilt appear indubitable? You should approach him now, when he has had time to examine these allegations, and see whether he will be more accessible."

"After his treatment of me, my dear Mrs. De Burgh?—his unjust and most cruel treatment, and after all I have suffered since!"

"Yes. He is an old man, and your nearest relation on earth. Remember, it is nobler to forgive than to avenge."

"I seek no revenge—Heaven forbid!"

"Is it not seeking revenge to embitter his last days with a false impression of your character?—to let him die, perhaps, under a dreadful apprehension that he may

have done you wrong—when it is too late to make amends? Is this your philosophy, Ernest?—is this your religion?”

“Shall I say it is my weakness, my poor, miserable pride?” replied Ernest, looking up. “But, thank you for your kind counsel. I will do what you say, let my uncle receive me as he will.”

As he ceased speaking, they were joined by Emily; and Ernest, with misgivings already aroused, saw in her blanched cheek and drooping eye a confirmation of his worst fears. There was a tremor in her voice too, as she returned his greeting, and she sat down at a frame of Berlin wool, and began to work in silence.

“You’ll blind yourself with that cushion, Emmy,” said Mrs. De Burgh. “Hadn’t you better put it aside for the day, dear, and amuse yourself with something else?”

“I assure you it doesn’t distress me at all,” replied Emily.

“It seems to be quite an elaborate composition,” observed Ernest, with forced composure. “May I ask what the subject is?”

“It’s the Master of Ravenswood rescuing Lucy Ashton,” replied Emily.

“Poor Lucy!” exclaimed Ernest. “That was a sad encounter for them both.”

“You speak of this incident as if it had really happened,” remarked Mrs. De Burgh; “whereas we know it is only an invention, coined by the brain of the novelist.”

“But we know also this same novelist drew his materials from nature—that the muse which inspired his imagination was the human heart,” replied Ernest. “In such hands, a novel becomes a history, as surely as any

chronicle of the day ; and we recognise the events it describes as things in life, though they may not be literally true."

" You are right to uphold your craft," rejoined Mrs. De Burgh, with a smile ; " and I am the last to say a word against it. But I should be sorry indeed to see works of fiction invested with the authority you ascribe to them."

" I am far from saying they are invariably entitled to it," returned Ernest ; " but if, while presenting faithful pictures of life, they show us the suffering inflicted by wrong, or, at other times, the retribution wrong may bring upon itself, then they may be read as much for instruction as amusement. Such was the object always sought by Scott—such is the object kept in view, in our own day, by Bulwer, Dickens, and Thackeray."

" I grant, vast good may be done by such novelists as they are," said Mrs. De Burgh.

" I know no story of the kind so effective as the *Bride of Lammermoor*," returned Ernest. " It shows us how a young and innocent girl was sacrificed to the ambition and the prejudices of others—severed from one she sincerely loved, and to whom she was dearer than life, and forced into a contract as odious as it was impious. We see in her fate, and in all the calamities connected with it, a dreadful picture of the misery produced by such proceedings, and of what may be expected to follow them. Is not such a story at once a lesson and a warning ?"

As he spoke, he looked at Emily, but she had bent over her work in such a way, that, sitting where he was, he could not see the tears trembling in her eyes ; and before Mrs. De Burgh could reply, her husband entered, in company with Wordley Glynn.

Any one but Wordley would have evinced surprise at

such an unexpected meeting with Ernest, under the circumstances in which they stood ; but surprise, as felt by others, was an emotion wholly unknown to that Master of Arts. It was for Mr. De Burgh to look surprised, as well as vexed, while Wordley, after paying his devoirs, made a courtly inclination to Ernest, though there was an expression of mingled pity and pain on his benevolent face, as much as to say—"I am sorry for you from my soul, but your conduct has been so bad, your course of life so shameful, that I must, for decency's sake, keep you at a distance."

Ernest had but waited for his appearance to depart.

"We shall see you again soon, I hope," said Mrs. De Burgh, as he bade her adieu. And she added in a lower tone, "Remember my advice about your uncle."

"I am only too grateful to you to neglect it," replied Ernest. And he took his leave.

"Unfortunate !" exclaimed Wordley, shaking his head, as the door closed upon him. "What will become of him ?"

"If you mean your cousin, sir," said Mrs. De Burgh, with a dignified air, "he appears to be making his way in the world, though, having neither fortune nor friends, his progress is necessarily slow."

"Ah ! my dear madam, I don't allude to that," replied Wordley. "His progress, his advancement, is a matter of no moment, for that might be easily remedied. No, no ! but the subject is too painful to speak of." And he passed his hand over his forehead, as if to wipe it away, leaving Mr. De Burgh quite impressed by the depth, intensity, and magnanimity of his extraordinary feelings.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A NIGHT WALK.

THAT evening Ernest found at his club a note from Mrs. De Burgh, stating that she had ascertained, from what had passed between Wordley and her husband, that his uncle was coming to town for the purpose of placing himself under an eminent physician, and that a ready-furnished house had been taken for him at Paddington, the address of which she enclosed, and where he was expected to arrive next day. She concluded by again urging him to lose no time in seeking a reconciliation.

The more Ernest thought of this step, the more he was persuaded of its propriety and expediency. In the first place he reflected, with some feeling of self-reproach, that it was undoubtedly due to his uncle, on the grounds mentioned by Mrs. De Burgh ; in the next, it was due to his own character and interests. His chief aim was to establish his innocence—to clear himself of an opprobrious and unjust aspersion ; but he could not but see, if he succeeded in this, that the result would be a material improvement in his position and prospects. Not that he had any idea of relinquishing his independence, which, through good fortune and evil, he had struggled so hard to maintain ; but, could he regain Mr. Glynn's good opinion, he might represent to him the cruel injustice of Wordley's addresses to Emily, for it was evident, he loved to think, that they were as distasteful to her as they were hateful to himself. This, indeed, now suggested to his

mind considerations and fears, which took precedence of all others. He was but too conscious that he loved Emily—that she had wormed herself into his heart, by her gentleness and docility, with an effect which, in the bitterness of his first disappointment, he could never have believed possible. Nor was his passion less fervent and devoted because it was less headstrong. The same enthusiasm might not be there; but there was the same strength of purpose; the same deep, earnest, vigorous feelings; the same constancy and fidelity. Emily was to him as the gentle rain after summer—the dew of morning after the withering heat of day. He felt that, if she, too, were taken from him—if she were given to another—then, indeed, his peace would be irrevocably and for ever gone.

As he did not know but measures might be taken to deny him access to Mr. Glynn, if his proposed visit should become known to Wordley, he thought it better to make it at a time when his cousin was likely to be out; and, accordingly, he did not present himself at his uncle's new abode till the evening. It was an old detached house, surrounded by a garden, and, though large and commodious, not such a residence as one would have thought suitable to a person of Mr. Glynn's fortune; but this, if it occurred to him at all, excited no surprise in Ernest, as he considered it in keeping with his uncle's simple and unostentatious character. A strange servant opened the door; and, stating that he wished to see Mr. Glynn on important business, but declining to give his name, Ernest was, after a moment's hesitation, admitted.

In the four or five years that had elapsed since he left Glynellan, his appearance had materially altered, and no less materially improved. Still Mr. Glynn, looking up as he entered, recognised him instantly.

“You!” he exclaimed, starting from his seat, as if

all his infirmity had vanished ; “ is it possible you can show your face here ? ”

“ I have come,” began Ernest, restraining his feelings, “ to—— ”

“ Stay,” interrupted Mr. Glynn. “ You want money. Name the sum, and you shall have it : only rid me of your presence.”

“ I want no money, sir,” answered Ernest. “ The time has been when I have wanted it—when I have wanted bread ; but I made no application to you.”

“ No, you take money from me without application,” said Mr. Glynn, with bitter emphasis, as he remembered the abstraction of his purse.

“ It may be idle to say I don’t understand your meaning,” replied Ernest ; “ for though such is the fact, I have not come here to cavil or to recriminate. Far from it. Yet something you must permit me to say, in my own justification. Some years have passed, sir, since you discarded me ; and, entering the world as I did, my struggle upward has necessarily been a hard one. But upward I have struggled—unfriended and unaided. I have obtained the position of a gentleman : and I maintain it by my own industry and exertions. Is it likely, then, I should come to you now for pecuniary assistance, when I shrank from such a step in my worst adversity ? ”

“ All this is mere words ! ” cried Mr. Glynn. “ What do you want ? ”

“ I want to clear myself of an unjust aspersion—to show I am a wronged and innocent man.”

“ Oh, yes ! you will say anything.”

“ I will say what is true, sir ; and having said it, shall feel I have done all that honour requires, and am not accountable for the future.”

"Honour!—honour!" said Mr. Glynn, contemptuously. "What is such a word to you?"

"It would be nothing indeed if I had committed the crime you suppose," replied Ernest, his voice trembling with suppressed resentment; "but, sir, I tell you now, what I told you once before—solemnly declare to you, by everything I hold dear and sacred, that you have condemned me wrongfully, and that my acquaintance with Jessie Clinton was characterised by nothing discreditable either to her or to myself—but, as I believe, the reverse."

"As *you* believe!" said Mr. Glynn, scoffingly. "I told you, you would say anything. But you are mistaken, man, if you suppose this is all honour requires. It requires at least restitution—restitution of the money you robbed me of, on the night you absconded from Glynellan."

"You accuse me of this!" cried Ernest, in a terrible voice.

But the strong and indignant emotions which he had restrained with so much difficulty, were now beyond his control: he felt that he was no longer master of his actions; and without casting one look at his uncle, he rushed from the house.

Mr. Glynn himself was hardly less excited. For some time he paced the room with quick and agitated steps, muttering incoherent exclamations, and occasionally striking his hand before him in a frantic manner. But gradually his demeanour became calmer and more rational, though the traces of anger remained, his face assumed an uneasy look, suggestive of perplexity and doubt.

He threw himself into a chair, and tried, by recurring to other thoughts, to drive the subject from his mind.

But in vain : it was too fresh, and too deeply-rooted ; and, through all his restless reflections, the one distracting theme still pursued him.

In spite of his prejudices—in spite of his false and misguiding impressions, he was touched by Ernest's visit, by his appearance, even by his words. There was an air of truthfulness about them that, turn them as he would, stamped them vividly on his mind, almost enforcing conviction. But it is the hard lot of age to have reaped a bitter experience of duplicity, and the nearer we approach to the grave, the darker and more corrupt seems the life behind us. Yet Mr. Glynn, though he clung to what he considered the damning facts, could not wholly stifle the compunctious visitings of nature. Doubts would arise, and they pleaded with an eloquent voice for mercy, or, at least, for further investigation. The old man shut his ear, his heart, against them ; and as he could not shake them off, suddenly started up, and resolved to go out.

Summoning his valet, he directed him to bring his hat and cloak.

" Shall I order the carriage round, sir ? " asked the astonished servant.

" Do what I tell you," returned his master, fiercely, " and no more."

The hat and cloak were quickly brought, and dismissing the obsequious attendant, Mr. Glynn sallied forth.

The hour was yet early, and the busy thoroughfares were alive with passengers, though the great tide of traffic, which poured through all day like an arterial stream was ebbing fast. The old man walked along as if the streets were vacant, seeing nothing of the passing throng, the flaring lamps, the gay and dazzling shops. Yet their presence, if unheeded by the eye, did oppress him, and his spirit yearned for some quiet spot, where he

might feel he was unobserved. In this mood he reached Cumberland Gate : the noble park, with its dark void, scarcely relieved by the outlying cordon of lights, was the very retreat he desired, and, entering, he sought the darkest walk, as if to hide himself in its gloom.

Now the fever of his brow was subdued ; he breathed more freely, and felt soothed by the solitude and darkness. He could hear the city's hum, but only to proclaim it at a distance ; he could see the lights, gleaming, like the fires of a hostile camp, round the boundaries of the park ; but they showed that he was away from the haunts of men, and alone.

Not alone ! It was not that he was followed, as he traversed the secluded path, by a ferocious-looking vagrant, who dogged his steps, till, in the darkest spot, he found that he was himself an object of surveillance, vigilantly pursued by a stealthy shadow, which could only represent a detective policeman—but, coming out by the Serpentine, the old man was accosted by a woman, who had been loitering some time on the bank, occasionally stopping to gaze in the black and fatal stream. At first he thought she was one of the Rahabs of the place, two or three of whom had tendered their company in his way across the park ; but, as he was passing on without reply, the exclamation of despair with which she turned away arrested him, and he called her back.

“Do you ask charity ?” he said ; “a miserable alms, to go and spend in drink !”

“Ah, no, sir !” was the reply. “I am perishing. Yet it is not that. Worse is before me if I return to my husband penniless.”

“I know you're an impostor,” returned Mr. Glynn ; “but here is money for you.” And he put some silver in her hand. “Now begone.”

"Oh, thank you! thank you!" cried the woman, "and bless you, sir. I was just thinking it would be easy to die here, if it were permitted; but now I see it would be a deadly, horrible sin. I will go—I am going. But I seem to know you, sir—yes, it must be! You are Squire Glynn, I'm sure."

The old man, who was turning impatiently away, looked round again. "Well, if I am!" he said.

"You are, then?" cried the woman, eagerly. "Oh! sir, can you tell me where Mr. Ernest is? He would befriend me if he knew where I was, I'm certain he would."

"What claim have you on Ernest Glynn?"

"No claim; but that is nothing. I am in misery; and if he is able, he will assist me."

"You have found him generous, then!" said the old man, tauntingly.

"Generous indeed," replied the woman, unconscious of his meaning. "I owe him more than I could make you understand; and if I had listened to his counsel, I should never have come to what I have."

"And are you the girl he led astray at Glynellan?"

"Led astray! Who has said that?"

"Everybody; it was in every mouth."

"Let who will say it, it is false—totally, utterly false. Was it leading astray to reclaim me from a debasing superstition, after he had saved me from a violent and cruel death? This is what Ernest Glynn did for me, sir—more: yes! more than I can find words or courage to tell. And can any—"

"Stop, woman!" cried Mr. Glynn, fastening his hand on her wrist, in a paroxysm of vehemence. "Seek not to cloke his guilt, and your own shame, by these unblushing assertions. The time is past when they could affect his welfare. I have cast him off."

"Is it possible?"

"It is true!"

"And still the world exists!" said Jessie, raising her eyes to Heaven. "Wrong, cruelty, avarice, oppression, go on and on; the virtuous suffer, the noble and chivalrous are crushed, the poor are trampled under foot; and yet the Lord seeth. Where will it all end?" She drew forth the money he had given her. "Here, sir, take this back. I have told you I am perishing; but, forlorn as I am, I will accept no aid from one who has injured Ernest Glynn."

"Then, throw it away," said Mr. Glynn, though less excitedly. "You swear he has behaved to you as you describe?"

"Most solemnly I swear it."

"Well, come to me to-morrow at this time, to my house," rejoined Mr. Glynn. "Here is my address."—He thrust a card into her hand, and, muttering some incoherent remark, walked away, leaving her still on the bank.

There was increased moodiness in his manner as he proceeded; and, occupied by his own thoughts, he took a different direction from what he intended, wandering into Piccadilly, till he came nearly to Queensbury House. There, as he was turning back, a man crossed from the other side of the way, and knocked at a mansion directly in front of him. It was his nephew Wordley.

"Can you tell me who resides in that house?" asked Mr. Glynn of a policeman, who was just passing.

"That 'ere, sir?" replied he. "It's a rummy ken, though we haven't been able to nab 'em yet. It's what they call a hell."

"Oh!" said Mr. Glynn. And, after looking at the house for a moment, he retraced his steps homewards.

CHAPTER XLV.

WORLDLY AFFAIRS.

THE fact of Ernest being a visitor at Mr. De Burgh's, and, as was very manifest, in high favour with his lady, if not with Emily, stimulated Wordley to lose no time, now he had secured Mr. De Burgh's sanction, in making his proposal to Emily herself ; and this he resolved to do on the following day, leaving her in the interim to the tuition of her father.

He had many reasons for pushing forward his suit as rapidly as possible ; and the reappearance of Ernest, at so important and critical a juncture, gave them a new significance. Severe losses at play and on the turf, the latter undertaken in a vain hope of retrieving himself, and so covering serious defalcations in the money he received for his uncle, but which only led him into fresh difficulties, had now brought his affairs to such a pass, that exposure, and consequently ruin, seemed inevitable. But marriage with the heiress of a millionaire opened a channel of escape from every embarrassment ; while the mere rumour of it, to which he should take care to give the utmost publicity, would stave off impatient creditors, and give him time to re-establish his fortunes.

With such alluring dreams does the bankrupt trader often beguile his imagination, at the very moment that the fatal docket is being struck against his name. Wordley was turning these things in his mind as he sipped his coffee at breakfast, when the door was thrown open, and a servant announced Captain Blackman.

The Captain, who had formerly been a bold dragoon, and had figured in that character at numberless trotting-matches, was a military-looking man, with a strongly-marked, but not unpleasing physiognomy, adorned with moustachios of that peculiar shade of black which betrays the Tyrian dye. His hair, or what remained of it, had evidently partaken of the libation, and a few scanty locks were strained over the centre of his head, in a vain attempt to conceal its baldness.

"My dear fellow, I'm extremely glad to find you at home," said he, at once throwing himself into a seat, "for I've heard something that has made me rather uneasy. But first, allow me to have the honour of shaking hands with you." This was a favourite blandishment with the gallant Captain. "'Pon my word, you've a nice crib here. But you're at your chocolate, I see. I can never resist chocolate. For half a farthing, I'd take a cup with you."

"I'm really concerned I can't tempt you," replied the polite Wordley, who, though retaining all his smiles, was much nettled at the Captain's visit; "but it's coffee."

"The very thing," cried the Captain. "If there's one beverage I love more than another—for I love them all, and am always thirsty—it's the juice of the grateful berry. I've drunk it in the East and in the West with the same pleasure and relish. By all means give me a cup."

"And what is your news?" said Wordley, carelessly, while the Captain, on receiving his coffee, helped himself to an egg and some ham.

"I'll tell you," rejoined his visitor. "But, 'pon honour, you'll think I'm making a second breakfast. It must be the country air that's made me so peckish. You're quite

the country here. I saw a field just below, and I don't know when I've seen one before. I thought Paddington was a slow place, but, by George, it puts a new edge on your grinders. Thank you, I *will* take another cup—it's so delicious. I'll cut the ham myself, thank you. 'Pon my word, it's first-rate. Where on earth do you get your hams?"

"I've not the least idea," said Wordley."

"All right," rejoined the Captain, putting his finger on his nose. "Sheridan's story—nunkey pays for Bobby. And, by the way, that reminds me, my dear fellow. You know our last bit of paper is due to-day?"

"Yes, but that need give you no concern. I've written to Hyams to put him off."

"Put off honest Moses! Ah! if you could do that, you'd be a Prince. But you can't—two to one you can't."

"You must excuse my not betting; but you may make your mind perfectly easy on that point, I assure you."

"And I can assure you I saw his ugly mug at the door, as I shot in, giving him the go-by in the cleanest manner; and I shouldn't wonder if he's only waiting till you go out to pounce upon you."

"Then, I shall be able to make a satisfactory arrangement with him, no doubt. But was it in reference to this bill you favoured me with the unexpected pleasure of a visit?"

"Well, not exactly—no! By George, my dear fellow, what a splendid head of hair you've got."—And the Captain involuntarily put his hand on his own bald crown.—"But the fact is, there's a rumour on town that you're making up to the daughter of old De Burgh; it's in the

papers, I believe ; but, perhaps, for all that, it isn't true."

"I'm happy to say the report of my being engaged—yes, I believe I may say engaged—to Miss De Burgh of Bydvil is perfectly true."

"You can never be such a flat—such a—'pon my word, my dear fellow, I don't know what term to use. Why, you'll have a hornet's nest about you in a twinkling, if the report's credited. Depend upon it, this is what has brought honest Moses here this morning."

"I'm sure, Captain, I feel as much indebted for his polite attention as for yours ; but I need hardly remind gentlemen of such experience in pecuniary transactions, that none of Mr. De Burgh's money will find its way into my hands till the marriage actually takes place."

"By Jove, it must never take place, unless you want to be stumped up. Don't you know old De Burgh's ruined ?"

"He'll stand a good deal of ruining."

"The whole tot of his cash is risked on the 'Atlas' Indiaman, and, by George, there's news this morning that the stern of a boat has been picked up, with 'Atlas' painted on it, and, hang me ! if the owners haven't come on old De Burgh for the insurance. So you'll see what chance you have of tin, in that quarter. A nod's as good as a wink."

"If we all possessed your sagacity, my dear Captain. But really it's most obliging of you to take such an interest in my affairs."—And Wordley spoke with a smile so benignant that it quite veiled the sarcasm.

"My dear fellow, I take the deepest interest in you," replied the Captain. "*Allow me to have the honour of shaking hands with you.* Honest Moses himself doesn't

feel more interested in your welfare than I do. And this brings me to the starting-post. If you're on the matrimonial plant, I'll put you up to a wrinkle, and, by George, with your head of hair, you can't help succeeding. I only wish the amiable Mrs. Blackman would have the good taste to depart, and, by Jove, I'd try my own luck in the race. What do you say to a widow as young as this girl of De Burgh's, beautiful as an angel, and with yellowboys enough to set up a bank?"

"Can there possibly be such a being?"

"All I ask is a thousand," returned the Captain. "You engage to give me a thousand, one day after marriage, and I'll undertake to smooth the way."—He pulled out his memorandum book, and made a note of the transaction.—"There, just append your autograph to that, and egad! it's all settled."

"I quite envy your way of doing business, my dear friend—your energy, promptitude, and felicity of resource," said Wordley, with such a playful air, that it was impossible to say whether he spoke in jest or earnest. "But I must really think over this—I must indeed—the proposal is so unexpected. And as to any written engagement, you must feel it is out of the question."

"Must depend on your promise, then. Well, I've a regard for you, Horatio, and, by George, under the circumstances, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds."

"And now will you excuse my bidding you good morning, Captain," said the courtly host; "for I've so much to do, I hardly know which way to turn."

"'Pon honour, I don't know how to get out—and that's the truth," returned the Captain. "I had the greatest difficulty in eluding honest Moses as I came in. The fact is, I have opened his eye to a small extent, apart

from our bill transactions, and, by George, I must sit him out—if he stops till next week.”

“That shall not be, for having favoured me with this visit, you are here under my protection ; and I’ll let you out another way.”

“My dear fellow, you’re a trump—by Jove ! Allow me to have the honour of shaking hands with you. Here we are.”—And he followed his host from the room.

Quickly returning, Wordley rang the bell.

“Mr. Hyams is here, is he not ?” he asked of the servant.

“Yes, sir, waiting to see you,” was the reply.

“Bring him up.”—And Mr. Hyams was brought up accordingly.

Honest Moses, as Hyams was familiarly termed, in reference, perhaps, to his tendencies in an opposite direction, presented more the appearance of a sheriff’s officer than a Rothschild. Such, indeed, was his ostensible calling, and, in that capacity, he also kept a sponging-house, where he afforded every domestic accommodation to gentlemen in difficulties, as he was always ready to do, in a pecuniary way to gentlemen at large. What made his benevolence more touching was the fact, as stated by himself, that these advances were invariably effected at a great personal sacrifice, insomuch that, to make up the sum required, he was compelled to throw in investments of no possible use to the borrower, though, as he alleged, they would ultimately have been very profitable to himself, if he could have kept them in his own hands.

“Mornin’, sir,” he said to Wordley. “I thought the Captains was here, sir.”—And he gave a leer, at which any Captain might have quaked.

“Captain Blackman has gone, Mr. Hyams,” replied the bland host. “He went off down the other stairs.”

"Well, what a strange mans the Captains is!" exclaimed Moses, turning up his eyes. "Why, it's only yesterdays he askies me to let him have the honour to shake hands with him, and now he gives me the slant—reg'lar. What a strange mans! But I've come to you about the little bill, Mr. Glynns. The partys who's got it won't let it stand over, sir."

"And who is this inexorable party?"

"Well, I mustn't tell the partys' name, Mr. Glynns," replied Honest Moses, who had never let the bill out of his own possession: "but I wanted moneys, sir, and was obliged to put the little bill in cirkelations, sir; and the bill would have been protested, Mr. Glynns, only I went to the partys, and on my oaths to get him the moneys, he's let me bring it away. But there'll be a black marks against it to-night, sir, if it isn't took up."

"This is hard treatment, Mr. Hyams, after my large dealings with you."

"I can't help it, sir, now the bill is in cirkelations. I tried to ease down the partys a bit, but it was no goes. I think he wants the moneys. And there's them other three little bills coming on, Mr. Glynns. If you can't meet this one, what'll you do with them?—speshly now you're going to be married!"

"Married! what put that in your head? Is it possible a man of your discernment, Mr. Hyams, can believe the silly report now on the town?"

"Aint it true, then? Well, I nevers!"

"It's a pure fabrication, I assure you. But, about the bill—to be short with you, I'll take up the one due to-day, but you must do me another."

"I'm always glad to oblige, Mr. Glynns, if I can, and as you aint goin' to be married; but the moneys is very close now, sir. But how mush?"

"Five hundred."

"Lor, Mr. Glynnys! I couldn't, sir."

"You must. I want the money particularly."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do—jist to oblige, I'll give you three hundred and fifty in moneys, and a hundred in wines and pictures—the pictures is worth the moneys. I'm lettin 'em go for nothin, jist to make up the suns."

"Ah Mr. Hyams! Mr. Hyams! if I had but half your brains—your genius, my good sir!" cried the courtly Wordley. "But positively I don't like this arrangement; the wine and pictures, though I should be sorry to underrate them, are absolutely useless to me."

"Then I'm very sorry I can't let you have the moneys, Mr. Glyms."

"Oh, I don't decline the terms. If the arrangement is absolutely necessary—that is, will be a convenience to you—we will conclude it at once. I will call at your office to-morrow at this time, and bring the bill with me."

"But the other little bill, Mr. Glynnys? You must take that up now, sir, if you please."

"Very well: it's only two hundred, I believe. Just wait a minute."—And he left the room.

He was absent so long that Honest Moses, who was rather of an inquisitive disposition, had time to make an inspection of the various papers in his desk, finding less to gratify his curiosity than he had expected. As Wordley, on coming back, turned the handle of the door to enter, he quietly reseated himself, and fixed an abstracted gaze on the ceiling.

"Lor, Mr. Glynnys, how you startles me, sir!" he exclaimed.

"Dear me! how concerned I am!" replied Wordley.

"I'd no idea you were so nervous, Mr. Hyams. But I hope this draft,"—and the usual benignant smile curled his lip—"will act as a restorative. And now I must trouble you for the bill."

The transfer was made, and as Wordley ran his eye over the bill, the Jew, with a quick imperceptible motion, raised the cheque to the light. Then a peculiar expression came over his face, and he folded it carefully up, and put it in his pocket-book.

"I shall see you to-morrows then, Mr. Glyms!" he said. "Mornin', sir."

"I've the pleasure of wishing you a very good morning, Mr. Hyams. Adieu, my good sir."

And they parted. The Jew, however, on his way down stairs, again drew the cheque from his pocket, and scrutinised it severely; but, as he heard steps approaching, hastily put it up, muttering—"This is the second, but if the peoples pays it, it's nuffin to me."

Wordley's levee was not yet over, and he now learnt that a strange rough-looking man was waiting below, who declared that he would not go away till he saw him. After a moment's hesitation, supposing that it was some importunate dun, whom a few civil words might conciliate, Wordley directed him to be admitted.

If anything could have betrayed him into an ebullition of surprise, it would have been the apparition which then presented itself. Wrapped in a shabby overcoat of drugget, which had once belonged to the cad of an omnibus, and now served to cover a heap of rags and dirt—with his face begrimed and unshaven, and his red locks falling in rank luxuriance from beneath his battered hat, the new-comer was yet so familiar to the memory of Wordley, that he instantly recognised Frost.

"Hilloa, Squire! you'll know me again, wont you—

you stares so !” cried the visitor. “Here I am back to you, you see. So fond of you I can’t stop away. And how’s Squire Wordley ? I aint forgot your name have I ?”

“Thank-you, thank-you, Mr. Frost,” was the complaisant reply : “I feel sincere pleasure in reciprocating your sentiments, which do you honour. I hope you are going on well in the world ?”

“Oh ! yes, first rate, Squire,” returned Frost, with a grin, as he looked down at his eloquent habiliments. “The worst of it is, I’m rather short of fluice, being all goins out and no comins in, and my uncle—for I’ve got an uncle as well as you, only he ain’t such a good ’un—won’t fork up without a pledge, which isn’t always quite handy. So, seeing you about town, I thought I’d just come to you, and ask you to lend me a trifle.”—And Frost concluded with a chuckle.

“It was exceedingly considerate of you to give me the preference,” replied Wordley, “and I feel flattered by it, although it entails on me the pain of refusing you—not, believe me, from any indifference to your necessities, but just at this moment I have so many more direct calls upon me, that I am obliged to be very economical.”

“What, while you’re gettin’ such a power of tin every night ! No, no, Squire. You’ve only been in town, as I’ve heard, about three days, and I’ve seen you myself goin’ to the queer shop in Piccadilly constant, all the time. You wouldn’t go there so often, if you wasn’t makin’ it answer. I know you better than that. But that aint all.”

“My good friend.”—

“It’s no use you’re tryin’ to blind me. You did so once before, but you won’t do it again. Once bit, twice shy. Either we comes to a clear understandin’, or I make a clean breast of it to your uncle.”

"I should have thought your experience in that way was not very encouraging, Mr. Frost."

"Perhaps it isn't," said Frost, with a scowl, which transformed his whole face. "But, I'll tell you what, Squire—times are altered. The girl we brought against Master Ernest is now my wife ; and I know where to lay my hands on him, too. Say the word, and we'll all come before your uncle together, and tell a different story from before, I know."

"And you must know also I care nothing for these threats," said Wordley, though really alarmed at the prospect of such a combination—"which I am surprised any one with your good sense, and honest manly feelings, should condescend to use. But I gather from this very fact you are in more distress than I imagined, and as I am sincerely desirous to serve you, I shall not allow what you have said to prevent my having the pleasure of ministering to your necessities. Pray accept this little assistance."—And he handed him a bank note.

"Humph !" said Frost. "Well, it 'ull do for the present. I'll come and see you again, Squire, when I've spent this."

He turned to the door, but, as he was going out, he was confronted by Mr. Glynn.

There was a quiet decision in the old man's face, as he entered the room, so different from his usual fretful and irascible manner, that Wordley, though preserving an outward calm, felt an instinctive presentiment of mischief. Perhaps, the same idea suggested itself to Frost ; for he slunk off without a word.

"So, this is the sort of associate—I should rather say accomplice—with whom you ally yourself," exclaimed Mr. Glynn, bending his keen eyes on Wordley with a lightning glance. "Don't dare, sir, to speak to me."

Enough, I know your devices—I know your haunts. This instant you leave my house, never to enter it again.”

“My dear uncle—”

“Will you go?” thundered Mr. Glynn. “My present intention is to give you enough to live upon, but say only a word more, and I send you forth a beggar. If you are still here, in one hour from this moment, I will have you ejected by force.”

But before the appointed time, Wordley, dreading the threatened consequences, had left the house, taking with him all his personal chattels. Nor did the revolution in the establishment end here. Within another hour all the servants, from the squire’s valet downwards, were discharged, and Mr. Glynn remained the only inmate of the house, with the exception of an old charwoman, engaged to attend upon him, and with whom he shut himself up in misanthropic solitude.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

FROM the privacy in which Mr. Glynn lived, Wordley felt assured that, for some time at least, the fact of a rupture having occurred between them was not likely to transpire, and therefore, if he could only avert impending embarrassments, that he might still retain unimpaired all the advantages essentially dependent on the connexion. These, he believed, would be particularly serviceable in forming a matrimonial engagement, of which he now

began to think very seriously, as the most eligible speculation in view, at the same time keeping carefully aloof from the De Burghs, not only as if he had never made any proposal for Emily, but as if he were actually unconscious of her existence.

He was not the only acquaintance whose cautious steps now avoided the great house in — Square ; but though the worshippers of the golden image which De Burgh, the millionaire, had set up, no longer hearing the tinkling brass which to them was far sweeter music than harp or dulcimer, adroitly shunned the desecrated spot, Mr. De Burgh was astonished to find that the distinguished characters attracted by intellect—the great notabilities of literature and science—still thronged the saloons of his wife. Their presence gave the proud man dignity, as well as courage ; and though Mrs. De Burgh urged him to prepare for the worst, by at once retiring to a humbler establishment, he resolved to hold out to the last, and maintain his ground till ruin was complete.

For some days he was unable to account for the non-appearance of Wordley, but, at length, the unwelcome truth began to dawn upon his mind, and his rage became uncontrollable. Still he could hardly persuade himself, on reflection, that such an affront had really been offered to him, and he impatiently awaited an opportunity of placing the fact beyond doubt.

That opportunity soon arrived. A grand ball at Lord Brookville's, the father of the Honourable Vincent Crane, was destined to include in the list of guests more than one character of this history, and, among others, Ernest, through the interposition of Mrs. De Burgh, received an invitation, and determined to be present.

Lord Brookville, like his son, had a genuine taste for the arts, and, on the eventful night, his noble reception

rooms were adorned with many superb works, both from the easel and the chisel. Statues of purest marble, cut with the delicacy of life, and seeming to swell with life's instinct and freedom, bathed in the dazzling effulgence of numberless chandeliers, while stately mirrors, reflecting the scene, appeared to open new saloons in every direction. But the radiant lights, the gorgeous apartments, the magnificent conservatory—statues, pictures, flowers—were as nothing to the company : to the bevvies of youthful and courtly beauties who thronged the ball-room, arrayed in all the perfection of nature, combined with all the aids of art. And to this grand spectacle bands of music, and the wavy figures of the dance, adding the charms of motion and sound to form and object and colour, gave an animation and vitality absolutely thrilling.

Though Mr. De Burgh was strongly in favour of a display, expressly to throw dust in the malicious eyes of the world, his wife, overruling the proposition, dressed for the occasion with her usual precise simplicity ; and the costume of Emily was as becoming as it was exquisite. Never, indeed, had the young girl looked so lovely ; and the thought that, in all probability, she should there meet one who would instantly single out her, among the whole assembly, as his first partner—a thought that banished the gloomy apprehensions and misgivings of the previous week, gave a glow to her cheek, a buoyancy to her spirits, an elasticity and life to her steps, that pierced not a few fair bosoms in the throng with the poisoned barb of envy.

More than once Mr. De Burgh heard, or fancied he heard, some half-whispered reference to the precarious tenure of his fortunes, as he moved through the rooms, and it was only too clear that many of his great acquaintances, who had basked in the sunshine of his opulence,

met him with the briefest possible greeting ; but the consideration with which he was received by the host and hostess, as well as by the Honourable Vincent, soothed his wounded pride, and he looked up with exultation when a distinguished circle gathered round his wife, attracted alike by the talisman of her attainments, and the grateful recollection of her friendship and hospitality.

A heightened joyousness in Emily's face, a brighter sparkle in her eye, a quicker pulsation of her heart, notified to herself, though to no one else, that Ernest was near. In a moment he was at her side.

But Ernest, though he addressed her with his usual kindly smile, appeared anything but happy. All his vivacity was gone ; and expecting every moment to see Wordley present himself, and claim Emily's hand, he looked on the brilliant scene around as a mockery of his despair.

Thus our lightest, as well as brightest hopes, are dashed violently to the ground at the moment we anticipate their fulfilment, and now Emily felt but too keenly the instability of human pleasure. The dance commenced, and they still stood silent together.

"Are you not going to dance?" asked Ernest, at length.

"Not this time," replied Emily.

"I imagined you were engaged."

"Oh, no !"

"What a dolt I am !" thought Ernest. And he instantly secured her hand for the next quadrille.

Wordley, whose appearance he so dreaded, was indeed present, though in another part of the room. In moving forward he was joined by Captain Blackman.

"There's the widow, my dear fellow," said the gallant

warrior. "Now go at her at once ; and, by George, with your manners, and such a head of hair as you've got, you'll have her down in a twinkling."

Wordley followed his friend's eye with his usual careless glance, but for once it kindled with awakened interest as it rested on the person indicated—a young and lovely girl, whose beauty was indeed tempered by a certain indescribable gravity, but who, neither in her dress nor years, presented any trace of the touching sorrow of widowhood.

"Isn't she a clipper?" pursued the Captain. "By Jove, if the amiable Mrs. Blackman—but she won't; she's too great a sticker. However, you'll remember it's a thousand."

"For merely showing me a pretty woman, my dear Captain?"

"No, but for getting her for you. Just ask Crane to introduce you, and I'll set to work on her father. I've got a wrinkle out of him already, and, egad! I'll pump you into him my dear fellow, at such a rate, that he shall talk of no one else for a month. Then I'll be at the daughter; and I'll lay it on as thick about you as if you were my brother, and we both belonged to the talented family. But sharp's the word. If you're not alive, there'll be a dozen before you."

"You are arranging a most pleasant little excitement for me, my dear Captain; but I've regarded you for a long time as one of my most valued friends, and I feel a sincere pleasure in acting under your advice. But there's Crane; I'll go and speak to him."

"And I'm down on the old fellow instantan'er."

Yet he lingered till the Honourable Vincent, who was eager to oblige every one, presented Wordley; and it did not escape his observation that the lady's colour changed,

and she gave something like a start, as her ear caught the name of Glynn.

"By Jove, these widows are like tinder," he muttered; "one spark, and they're all in a flame. What a chance for me, if the amiable had only departed! but, by George, she's got the longevity of Widdicombe. But here goes at the governor!"

"Captain Blackman, how do you do?" said Miss Letitia Starchley, arresting him. "Have you heard of Bacon's—"

"Essays?" cried the Captain. "Oh, yes! but can't say I ever read 'em. Too slow."

"You stupid Captain!" said Tish, coquettishly; "I was not referring to the great philosopher, but to my brother Bacon, the philosopher that is to be. I was going to ask you if you had heard of his—"

"Getting the scholarship? Oh, yes."

"No, of—"

"Going in for honours?" cried the Captain. "Twenty-three times."

"Then every one's talking of it, I suppose. But that is not it. Do you know he's passed his little go?"

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the man of war, making his escape.

"Mr. Parkyns, have you heard the news?" asked the undaunted Letitia.

"Do you mean as to the authorship of the slashing article on Bruggins, in the 'Literary Sewer?'" rejoined Parkyns.

"No, but about Bacon. He's passed his little go."

"The force of Bacon can no *further* go," muttered the Honourable Vincent to the critic, as he was passing.

Wordley, meanwhile, had, as already intimated, met an

unexpectedly gracious reception from the young and beautiful widow.

"Your name sounds very familiar to me," she observed, after a few common-places. "Is it not of Welsh origin?"

"Yes. Our family has been seated in Wales, according to the pedigree, from the time of King Arthur. We claim to be descended from Sir Caradoc, who was one of the knights of the Round Table."

"And the favourite of Queen Gwenover, I think?"

"Ah! you know the story, then? It's rather an interesting episode of family history."

"I should call it family romance."

"That is too severe for you. I should have imagined you were all faith and trustfulness."

"Of course. I even believe in the pedigree with the famous marginal note—'About this time the flood happened.'"

"A flood of sunshine, then, if it was about this time," said Wordley, gallantly. But the lady, though she appeared pleased, did not recognise the compliment.

"Have you clans in Wales, as they have in Scotland?" she asked.

"No. That institution is peculiar to the Scotch."

"Then, there are not a whole host of people with the same name—say, for instance, of the Glynns—settled in particular spots?"

"Yes, there are; but in our part of Wales I know of no Glynns but ourselves—that is, my uncle and myself."

A shade came over the beautiful face of the lady as he uttered these words—so different from its previous expression, that, at another time, it could not have escaped his notice; but the music, after a momentary pause, again striking up, his attention was diverted to the quadrille.

At the same time, he devoted himself so assiduously to his partner, that he did not observe, on taking his place, that they had for their *vis-à-vis* Ernest and Emily.

The two lovers—for such Ernest and Emily were in fact, though not in word—were equally unobservant, and, in all that brilliant company, saw no one but each other. For a time they forgot their previous misgivings; and, as they joined their hands, the inspiring strain of the band, and the sweeter melody of their own innate sympathies, combined with the scene, the situation, and the moment, to exalt and spiritualize their happiness. It was not till they were crossing in the dance that they discerned Wordley; and Ernest could not repress an exclamation as, glancing at his partner, he recognised in the young and beautiful widow the once adored Clara Meredith.

Clara, too, uttered an exclamation, but it was as much of joy as surprise, though her cheek paled, her step trembled, her fine eyes flashed fire, as Ernest, unheeding her half-extended hand, passed her with a low inclination.

The two girls—for though one had been a wife, they were of the same age, and but just opening womanhood—instinctively fixed their gaze on each other, with an interest and emotion different in tone, but strangely similar in character and degree.

These effects were not overlooked by one who eagerly watched the progress of Wordley. The stake of a thousand pounds, which he conceived himself to hold in the issue, had greatly quickened the optical perceptions of Captain Blackman, and he had posted himself on a good spot for observation, while he took care, at the same time, to carry out his design of commending Wordley to the Judge.

“Did you notice my friend Glynn, sir, particularly?” he asked, as they were left alone.

“Yes, I did,” replied the Judge, “I was struck by



After the wedding

his name, which reminded me of some one I once knew in America."

"And did you observe what a remarkable head of hair he's got?" returned the Captain. "That hair owes nothing to Rowland, I assure you. Its rich luxuriance is entirely natural, and the result of a cranial fruitfulness. By George, sir, there's no mistake about that hair! It covers the head-piece of a genius."

"You think Mr. Glynn a clever man?" rejoined the Judge, as if rather puzzled by the Captain's rhapsody.

"Clever! By Jove, sir, he's one of the most extraordinary men in this country."

"Is he in Congress—Parliament, I mean?"

"Oh!" thought the Captain, "you're looking after the grapes, are you?"—And he said aloud—"In a few weeks he'll be in for his county, sir, which, in fact, all belongs to his uncle. Talk of the *Prince* of Wales—i'faith, I've every respect for His Royal Highness—but Glynn's uncle is *King* of Wales; and, as to his cash—by George! if we went by that, his name ought to be Nugget. But in addition to this, before six months have passed—yes, I'll only ask six months—you'll see Glynn in one of the best berths under the Crown."

"A placeman!" said the Republican, knitting his brows.

"Yes, sir," answered the Captain, not observing his dissent, and going further and further into the mire; "and he'll have more than one place, too, and a brace of nice snug sinecures besides, I assure you; and, by George, sir, if he marries, and can catch hold of any relations—say, for instance, his wife's father, he'll pop him into a settlement, and every one of his wife's kindred will be handsomely provided for at the public expense."

"Ah!"

"'Pon honour, yes, sir ! I know his sentiments. Now let us suppose his father-in-law was a fine, portly, venerable-looking old fellow like yourself—egad, sir ! he'd have you knighted."

"Me knighted !" said the indignant Republican.

"No mistake about it. He'd get you a title, sir."

"But I'm an American citizen."

"No matter for that. If you were a Kamschatka citizen, it would be all the same, when Glynn's interest is brought to work. By Jove, sir, if that were all, there are ways and means of turning you into an Englishman, and I'll undertake to prove at Herald's College that you *are* an Englishman, or, at least, that your father was."

"Sir !" exclaimed the Judge, with kindling wrath, "I tell you again I'm an American."

"And I tell you again, if you were fifty times an American, it's not the least consequence," returned the Captain. "I'll engage—But, wheu ! what's the matter now ? One moment !"

And he hurried up to Wordley, who was just leading Clara, more agitated than she was willing should appear, to a seat.

She had danced out the quadrille, repressing the bitter sense of wounded love and pride, and, perhaps, of self-reproach, which Ernest's demeanour had awakened. In the first rush of her feelings she had tried to show indifference to his averted eye and cold upbraiding look, and even affected to be in high spirits, chatting to Wordley with constrained vivacity. But this, if it blinded others could not delude herself, and was too great an effort to be sustained. The little glimmer of defiance had quite burnt out by the time she rejoined her father, and her only wish was to be gone.

What a relief to escape from the lordly saloon, with its garish lights, its flashing mirrors, its stately company ; and throw herself back, heart-stricken as she was, in the darkest corner of the carriage, where she might brood unobserved ! But it was not till she reached her own chamber—not till she saw in the faithful glass the spectral image of herself—that she bowed her head on her hands, and wept.

Was this the heroine ? Was this the stern girl who, more than emulating the reckless daughter of Sparta, sacrificed her lover at the shrine, not of country, but of political feeling ? Alas ! long ago she had awakened from her miserable delusion ! Her heart, which she had thought adamant, was only as wax, melting at the first genial gleam of sympathy : she could not turn the milk of human kindness, perpetually welling in her bosom, into gall ; she could not change the warm blood in her veins into stone. Heroine ! no ! every thought, every feeling, every wish and hope and fear, speaking with one mocking and accusing voice, told her she was only a woman.

The wife of a month, to be for ever a widow—in the fulness of her beauty and promise, in the first glow of her youth, on the very threshold of life—cast down, smitten, and crushed by her own wilful, suicidal hand. The wreath was torn from her hair ; her priceless gems were scattered on the floor ; the whole world now could give her nothing but a grave.

Yes ! there was yet one slender hope—one. It was the straw of the drowning man, but she clutched it. And the more she mused upon it, the more practicable and more available did it seem. To how many of us, in such moments, does the straw take the dimensions of a cable !

CHAPTER XLVII.

PLAYING WITH EDGED TOOLS.

ALTHOUGH philosophy and experience alike attest that the final universal distribution of rewards and punishments is the prerogative of Futurity, inasmuch as they are administered without discrimination by the Present, it does, nevertheless, sometimes occur, in cases by no means rare, that we obtain our deserts, whether for good or evil, even in this transitory sphere. The man who, from a peculiar condition of fortune, has been all his life struggling with adversity, without help, without encouragement, without results—in silence, in solitude, in sorrow—suddenly finds the light of the world's favour beaming on the windows of his dwelling, dispelling the gloom of its dark chamber, and rekindling the expiring energies of his heart. On the other hand, the miserable schemer, whose whole career has been one round of success, yet who has never achieved a single step but by base and crooked means, making his every move on the chess-board of life subservient to the one great purpose of checkmating his neighbour, suddenly finds, just as capricious Fortune seems to be pouring upon him her shower of gold, that the long summer of his prosperity is over, and that nothing lies before him but dishonour and ruin.

To such a destiny the lately all-fortunate Wordley was now fast tending; and it was a singular coincidence that, at every point where he sought to retrieve himself, still by the same system of scheming and trickery, he was now

met by Ernest, whom he had so shamefully wronged, and who, had he always pursued an honourable and upright course, would have been his most natural, as well as most steadfast ally. Their encounter at Lady Brookville's ball had brought this fact forcibly before him ; but he did not view it as a natural measure of retribution, suggestive of compunctious and remorseful reflections, but solely as a new evidence of Ernest's implacable malignity. In these incidents he had no desire to look from effect to cause. It was enough for him to feel, in his present reverses, that wherever he turned—whenever he grasped at a prize—the figure of Ernest thrust itself, like an avenging ghost, between him and his object, and opposed, repelled, and defeated him.

In nothing was this more obvious than in his relations with Clara, on whom, as he fondly flattered himself, he was making the most favourable impression, when the appearance of Ernest completely frustrated his designs. However Clara sought to disguise her feelings in the few moments that followed, so close an observer was not to be deceived, and he saw but too clearly that Ernest already possessed her affections—a conclusion in which he was confirmed by her speedy retreat from the ball-room.

He was sitting in the quarters he had engaged on leaving his uncle's, ruminating on these various incidents, when he was apprised that some one wished to see him, and, from the description, at once divined his visitor to be Frost. Here was a new source of vexation, for which he had been totally unprepared, but which, threatened as he was on every side, was still the most pressing of his embarrassments. Before, however, he could make up his mind as to how he should receive the bailiff, a hasty step was heard on the stair, and he was confronted by Captain Blackman.

The Captain's first act was carefully to close the door.

"By Jove, you're in for it now," he then said. "You've only one thing to do, and that's to bolt."

"My dear Captain, what can you mean?" replied Wordley, quite unruffled. "But whatever you have to say, be assured, nothing can harass me so much as to see you discomposed. Pray now——"

"It's no use you're taking it cool," cried the Captain, interrupting him; "for, by George, this is too ugly a business. How you could get yourself into such a jolly scrape with a headpiece like yours, does take the shire out of me! To be in debt is excusable; egad! under certain circumstances, as in my own case, struggling with adversity, bad luck, et cetera, et cetera, it's honourable. The extent to which I've opened my snip's eye is astonishing; the fellow that makes my boots is a severe sufferer; but, by Jove, you never catch a weasel asleep. They may nab me for debt—if they can; but I'll never put mysdf in the power of Bow-street."

"Which is a polite intimation that I have not been so prudent," rejoined Wordley, with his fine smile.

"My dear fellow, you know my weakness—that I can't bear to touch people on the tender," returned the Captain; "but there's a maxim of mine which you have probably heard me repeat in particular exigencies, namely, a nod's as good as a wink. Well, the cheque you gave that rascal, Honest Moses, has been stopped at the bank, and, 'pon honour, some dodger has been touching up the figure, and turning twenty into two hundred. That's rather a go, I think."

Wordley seemed to think it was.

"Now, I'll tell you what," pursued the Captain; "your ticket's America."

"It's really exceedingly embarrassing," observed Wordley.

"Particularly so, egad!"

"But," resumed Wordley, "I may possibly be able, if we can gain a little time——"

"My dear fellow, I'm sorry to interrupt you," said the Captain, "but, as to time, by George, it's on the wing. I'll give you two to one you haven't got ten minutes. In a quarter of an hour you'll have Birnam wood here, as Macbeth would say—though we familiarly call it Scotland-yard."

"Is it so urgent? Then, what do you advise? Perhaps I'd better proceed at once to Liverpool."

"The very place where they'd be sure to nail you. No! they'll telegraph you on all the lines. Your only plan's to stop in town, under a cloud. Town's the place, my dear fellow, if you want to keep quiet. Meanwhile, I'll look out for a ship; and, when all's settled, we'll go off from the coast together, for, by George, I think a sea voyage will be beneficial to my own health, considering the amount of queer paper we've got out. The only thing is the ready—what shall we do for that?"

"I've got two hundred," said Wordley, producing some Bank-notes.

"'Pon honour, we must make that do, then. But now the question is, where are you to hide? Moses will leave no stone unturned to catch you, for he's got a notion of squeezing your uncle a bit. Ah! I have it! That fellow I saw below—he'll do!" And he moved towards the door.

"Pardon me," cried Wordley, arresting him. "But how will you employ him?"

"Let's have him up. He'll be able to stow you somewhere."

"He ! he can't be trusted."

"But he can be bought, my dear fellow." And the Captain vanished from the room, presently reappearing with Frost.

"My dear Mr. Frost, I'm extremely glad to see you," said Wordley, as complacently as if nothing had happened. "You've come at a moment when I'm sadly in want of your advice, if not your assistance ; and I have such a confidence in your regard for me, that I feel a real pleasure in applying for your good offices."

"Well, you do know how to lay it on—uncommon, Squire," said Frost, with a malicious grin, "and that's no word of a—hum. But, come, what do you want ?"

"By George, yes, that's the point," observed the Captain. "Our friend, my man, is strongly recommended by the faculty to try the effect of a few days' strict seclusion on his nerves, which—you know it's true, my dear Glynn—have become so morbidly excited, that he can't endure the sight of a policeman. Egad ! it's extraordinary— isn't it ?—when you come to consider what a harmless body of individuals the police are. But this is imperative—he must be placed where there's no chance of his seeing a policeman."

"I'm your man," said Frost. "But I only know of one crib, and it's rather a go-down for the Squire."

"My dear Mr. Frost, let it be what it may, I can have no hesitation in placing myself under your guidance," said Wordley.

"Aint he very polite ?" asked Frost of the Captain.

"But what shall we do for tog ? You can't go there in this."

"By George, no !" said the Captain. "But we can arrange that as we go along in the cab. And, egad ! we

must fix the price now. Fifty pounds for you when he's safe on shipboard."

"That will do," replied Frost.

"You know how to do business, my man, I can see," observed the Captain. "But now make yourself scarce. Wait at the top of the street, and you'll see us get into a cab. Follow till we stop, and then jump in ; and if we don't go along then it will be a pity."

"Won't it ?" grinned Frost.

And with this interrogatory he departed.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE INTERVIEW.

AND what was the one bright, flitting syren hope that brought back a semblance of peace to Clara's heart ?—yet not peace, but sufferance ! On what could she found any rational expectation of healing, with her own unaided hand, the wide breach which divided her from Ernest ? Surely she could not forget how she had repelled and spurned him, when he laid the whole future of his life at her feet ! Never could she efface from the too vivid mirror of memory, as it rose to her eye, the terrible look of anguish with which he had pleaded for pity, when she banished him from her presence. It had haunted her at the nuptial altar and the marriage feast : it had wrung from her a cry of agony, when she was but newly made a bride : it had risen up, like a spectre, by the bier of her dead husband, and frowned upon her from his grave. She

saw it now—now, through the darkness of night, through the blacker darkness of her remorse.

But what did it tell her?—ay, what?—that he had loved her, loved too well. And had twenty brief months, which now seemed but yesterday, so impaired her charms, that they no longer retained their influence? Was her beauty, on which his enslaved eyes had been wont to linger so fondly, so adoringly—already faded? She could not shut her ear to the assurance, now so soothing and inspiring, that it had never before possessed such power—never appeared to so much advantage. If ever it could claim the homage of a kindred mind—ever light up the flame of true and abiding love, it must be now!

Then, why had Ernest met her so coldly? The reason, when she came to reflect, was obvious. Ernest was the soul of honour. He naturally looked upon her as the wife of Wilmore, and, as such, she was, as it were, dead to him. BUT IT WAS WILMORE WHO WAS DEAD. She was emancipated, free! The thought sent an electric thrill through her frame—a thrill of joy, of transport, of rapture: yes! though in the midst of it, her heart, awaking from its selfishness, bitterly smote and upbraided her. But can the young stand with sorrow by the yawning grave, when love and fruition beckon them away? Can Beauty array herself in sackcloth and ashes, when imagination pictures her lover at her feet?

Ernest *had* loved her, he must, he should love her still. She would go to him herself, and, as it was her lips that had raised a barrier between them, from her he should hear, now her hand was again her own, that that barrier was removed. Was this a humiliation? was it repugnant to her sense of delicacy and propriety? Let her reflect, if it appeared so, how cruelly she had wronged him, and, at the same time, remember what misery and suffering

she had also brought on herself. *That* told her such a step was no degradation. It was an atonement, an expiation. He should know she was free ; and the strong love which she was assured he once bore her—which he had evinced and avowed—must then assert its ascendancy.

But, as she nursed this soothing conclusion, a recollection of the fair girl at Ernest's side, as he moved through the dance, came upon her with the suddenness of an apparition, making her start wildly from her pillow. Could he have been false to the vows he had so solemnly pledged to herself ? Alas ! those vows, solemn and fervent as they were, she had never accepted. Now she could understand the full value of what she had refused ; now when she was unshackled ; and he—dreadful to think, to imagine possible—might be irretrievably pledged to another.

She tried to conjure up Emily's image, and it came—a form of light and grace and loveliness ; but when she sought, with the eager eye of jealousy, to recall and scrutinize each individual feature—to bring up clearer each dazzling charm, the image grew imperceptibly fainter, leaving indeed a distinct impression of beauty, but one that baffled analysis. Yet there was ever a something beaming out from the figure, like a revelation, a warning ; and, as often as it flashed across her, she felt a bitter pang of misgiving.

But her purpose never wavered ; she would go to him ! Let it end how it would, let him be altered as he might, she would see him again—face to face, and alone. She had spurned him—spurned his honest, noble, devoted love ; and now, if such was his deliberate wish, he might as haughtily reject her.

It seemed morning would never come ; but, at length, its waking glance—grey and dim, but how welcome—

broke into the room. Then it grew brighter and brighter, opening a glorious day ; and Clara's heart beat high as she thought—on such weak auguries do we hang our destiny !—that its radiance was auspicious.

By an apparently careless inquiry she had learnt Ernest's address ; and after breakfast, she went out unobserved, and engaging a cab, proceeded to his chambers.

Ernest was busy at his vocation when he learnt, to his surprise, that a lady wished to see him ; and before he could make any observation, Clara, closely veiled, followed the servant into the room. The next moment they were alone ; but she still stood silent, with the long, thick veil masking her face, waiting for him to address her.

" I have not the pleasure of knowing you," he said at length, though there was a slight tremor of doubt in his voice. " May I ask to what I am indebted for this visit ? "

Now she raised her veil, and the effect gave her new confidence.

" Clara !—Mrs. Wilmore ! " exclaimed Ernest.

" Yes ! Clara !—that is the name I like best," she replied. " It reminds me of my days of happiness, when I knew no other."

" But it is one I have no longer a right to use."

" If I restore you the right."

" It is impossible."

Her colour came and went, but she replied in a calm voice—

" I never thought to hear you say so. But our feelings alter as we grow older, and I have myself changed since I saw you. But I have been in affliction. You know Wilmore is dead ? "

“Dead?”

“Yes. Within a month from—from—our marriage, he was thrown from his horse, and killed on the spot.”

“How shocking!”—And he hastened to place a chair for her—for in his surprise at her appearance, he had kept her standing.

“Am I to sit down?”

“Will you?”—It was not the entreaty of a lover, but she complied.

“You have grown much graver than you used to be,” she said, with an unconscious sigh.

“I have been under the same discipline as yourself—affliction, which makes us all grave,” he replied.

“Do you think it has produced such a marked effect on me?”

“You are not so gay as you were.”

“But I am older.”

“Twenty months.”

“How well you remember! That is exactly the time.”

“I thought so,” said Ernest.

She raised her eyes—eyes that spoke more eloquently than words—sweet, soft, liquid azure eyes, opening depths of thought and feeling and tenderness, which no plummet could sound. But Ernest knew their power, and would not look up.

“Twenty months!” she said, as if to herself. “It might have been as many years—so tedious, so endless has the time seemed in passing! Yet it is nothing to glance back.”

“You think not?”

“Sometimes I do. You loved me, then, Ernest!”

“I did indeed.”

“Yes, and I knew it before you told me—long before!

How I used to sit and watch for you—to know the precise minute you would arrive, to hear and recognise your approaching step! Why should I scruple to tell you, Ernest?—when you told me, unworthy, miserable that I was—so much—so much!”

“You should have forgotten that,” said Ernest, covering his eyes with his hand.

“How could I, when every burning word had entered here?”—And she smote her breast.—“Could I think even my country was more dear, more precious! But you have recalled, repudiated those sentiments!”

Ernest was silent.

“Why do you avert your face?” she said, pleadingly. “Am I so much less than I was, that you will not even look at me?”

“I dare not look at you.”

“Dare not?”

“No.”

“And why?”

“Because you were once the light of my eyes, the joy and hope and pride of my heart, and in you and for you I seemed to live!”

“*Once* I was this?—*once*! Cruel Ernest!”

“It is you who are cruel, Clara!—yes! for this one last time, I say Clara! You call me back to memories I have buried, buried with anguish, and—why should I suppress it?—with tears! You drag them from the grave, but neither you nor I can bring them back to life. They have perished for ever.”

“Still cruel, cruel!” said Clara, with a flood of tears.

“No”—and “dear Clara” was on his lips, but was denied utterance.

“You hate and despise me!”

"Never can I do so!"

"But can you forgive?"

"Freely."

"Ernest, I see how it is!"—and she spoke with constrained calmness.—"That heart, which was once all mine, which you solemnly pledged and devoted eternally to me—that dear, but false, stern heart, you have now given to another. I feel we are together for the last time, yet tell me it is so: let the bitter truth come from you."

That was indeed a bitter truth, which blanched his cheek and almost sealed his lips, while Clara uttered a cry and rushed from the room.

Ernest's first impulse was to follow her—to bring her back: but for what? Prudence, though in the faintest whisper, counselled him to refrain. True, she had revived in him something of his former admiration, but it was no longer associated with any tender or impassioned sentiment. Nor did she appear to be the same Clara he had loved so devotedly. The outward form indeed was there, but, as it seemed to him, it was tenanted by another spirit—a spirit far different from that which had presented her to his charmed eye as a being, not of earth, but of light. No! this was not the Clara of his love, of his imagination, even of his memory. The one was an angel; the other, alas! was but poor, feeble, fragile flesh and blood. The casket was still untarnished, but its precious gem was gone.

Then, why follow her? why renew and prolong a scene so terrible to both, and which, after all, must have the same termination? All he could say, if he expressed his real feelings, would perhaps fail to soothe her, while every word would be torture to himself. Better as it was!

The pang of separation, for him as well as her, was sharp and piercing, but it must be endured ; and now its first cruel racking force was spent.

Cold, stern, inexorable philosophy ! yet true ! It was more humane, with the sentiments which now inspired him, to let her depart unconsolated, since uncomforted it must have been ! This was the thought that held him back—that bound him to the spot like a chain. No shade of resentment, no vindictive regrets, mingled for a moment with the gentle, kindly flood of pity she had awakened in his bosom. But it was purely pity, and not akin to love.

Nor, in the height of his agitation, did he forget the impressions which now linked him to Emily—impressions fraught, to all appearance, with the same evil destiny. The rumour indeed of Mr. De Burgh's approaching ruin was no longer confined to particular coteries : it had that morning been hinted at, in unmistakable terms, in an influential journal. Viewing this fact in connection with the wilful inattention manifested for Emily by Wordley, at Lady Brookville's ball, Ernest, if he had been of a more sordid mould, might easily have conjured up a brighter prospect for himself ; but he could never build his own happiness on the misery of others, and Mr. De Burgh, in his great reverse of fortune, possessed no truer, warmer, or more devoted friend.

All day—for work was now thrown aside—his mind was busy with these distracting thoughts, and at night, he could hardly drag himself away, though obliged to attend the first representation of a new tragedy, on which he had to furnish a critique for a morning paper. But once in the theatre, he remained till the performances closed, and even then, unwilling to return home, strolled leisurely through the streets, glancing at the darker life

which they faintly shadowed forth. Gradually the very shadows disappeared. It was the dead hour of night, and he stopped before a large house, which, though he had seen it but once before, was vividly impressed on his memory : the next moment he sprang over the gate and disappeared.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE HOUSE AT PADDINGTON.

It was past midnight when a man, who had been crouching some time in an adjacent shrubbery, came out on the drive before Mr. Glynn's house at Paddington, and cautiously reconnoitred the premises, back and front. The hat of the marauder was pulled over his eyes, and the collar of his worn coat turned up, so as to leave but little of his face visible, but it was not difficult, as he came within the range of a neighbouring gas-light, to recognise the features of Frost.

Jessie, though she would willingly have kept it a secret, had been obliged to inform him of her rencontre with Mr. Glynn, and subsequent visit to Paddington ; and hence he had ascertained, by dexterous inquiries, what was the old man's mode of life, in as far as he appeared to be shut up alone in the house, with no attendant but the old charwoman. This suggested to him the practicability of a descent on the mansion, as a very easy and promising undertaking.

Nor were his expectations unwarranted. An old man,

burdened with years and infirmity, and an equally infirm woman, offered an easy prey, if it should be necessary to resort to violence ; and from no violence would he shrink, if it would add to his booty. Let him secure but that, and he would soon be on his way back to America, by the same vessel that conveyed Wordley.

All was quiet. The window of Mr. Glynn's room, where a light had long lingered, was now dark ; a glance down the lonely road showed that no person was about ; the policeman on the beat had just passed, and judging from the previous intervals, half an hour would elapse before he again came round : in that brief space the two inmates of the house might be sent beyond the reach of earthly aid.

Frost first attempted the door ; but strong plates of iron, with which it was impanelled within, effectually resisted his incisions, and, finding it thus secured, he saw that an entry here was impossible. A low window held out a more hopeful prospect, and laying down his implements, he spread a pitch-plaster over one of the panes, when he was able to push it through without any crash, the broken glass sticking to the plaster. He then scooped a piece out of the shutter, with a sort of circular sweep, and, thrusting his hand through the orifice, removed the fastening, and opened the shutter without difficulty. The next moment he was in the house.

A profound stillness reigned, broken only by the ticking of a dial in the adjoining passage, which, as Frost stood listening, struck one. As the vibration ceased, the burglar turned on his lantern. He was in the dining-room, and a massive, old-fashioned sideboard, looming out from the wall, instantly attracted his eye. His professional instruments were again drawn forth, and the various locks successively and speedily picked, but only

to disclose emptiness. He turned away with a malediction.

Again masking his lantern, he was passing into the hall, when a sound overhead, like a footstep, arrested him. But it proved to be only one of those unaccountable noises so common in old mansions, and after an instant's pause, he proceeded—first, however, taking the precaution to throw off his shoes, thinking he could move about more quietly with his naked feet.

The rooms below were soon ransacked, but with little result ; and he began to suspect, with some truth, that whatever was valuable in the place would be found in Mr. Glynn's room. Thither he accordingly repaired, determined to secure a rich spoil.

Mr. Glynn, after lying some time awake, had sunk into a troubled doze, when he was aroused by the same noise that had startled Frost. Not so easily reassured, he sat up in the bed to listen. All was still ; but his suspicions, once excited, were not readily allayed ; and presently he heard a rustling sound in the passage. This was followed by another, as if some one had turned the handle of the door ; then a skeleton key was thrust into the lock ; and the door, which was right opposite to the bed, slowly opened.

It was quite dark ; but the old man, as he sat up in bed, saw a black figure enter, and stand peering round. As he continued to gaze at him, Frost, supposing that he was asleep, disclosed his light.

"Oh ! you're lookin' about you, are you ?" he said, perceiving Mr. Glynn.

"Yes," was the calm reply. "Who are you, and what do you want here ?"

"It's no odds who I am," answered Frost !—"nobody, if you like ; but I'll tell you what I want ; I want swag."

"You mean you've come to rob me!"

"No such thing : I've only come to take what you've got. You aint half so polite as Squire Wordley. But it's true, there's no time now for compliments : so I'll just fill my sack, and walk."

"Man, you shall take nothing from here!" cried Mr. Glynn, springing from the bed. "You think, because I am old, I am helpless ; but you shall see it is not so."— And he snatched up a poker, and as Frost rushed upon him, aimed a blow at his head, which, had it taken effect, would certainly have been a decisive one.

"I'll have your blood for that !" cried the burglar, with an oath.

"Murder ! help !" cried another voice. And the old charwoman rushed into the room.

"Silence, you hag !" exclaimed Frost, "or I'll stick a knife into you."

"Call from the window, woman !" shouted Mr. Glynn, struggling in the burglar's grasp.

Before she could do so, however, Frost, flinging Mr. Glynn from him, intercepted her, and, with one blow, felled her to the floor. Then, drawing forth a knife, he was rushing again on Mr. Glynn, when his arm was seized behind, and the next moment he was stretched prostrate.

"Gallows ! is it you ?" he cried, starting to his feet as he found himself confronted by Ernest, who, hearing the outcry, had entered the house through the open window. "Take that, then."

He levelled a pistol ; but, by some accident, the cap had fallen off, and missing fire, he threw the useless weapon at Ernest's head, and rushed out.

But a destiny was upon him. In the dark, his foot caught in the balustrade of the staircase, and he plunged

headlong down the long flight of spiral stone steps, never stopping till he reached the hall. Ernest, only waiting to ascertain the safety of his uncle, had darted after him, but too late to arrest his descent.

Meanwhile, the cries of the charwoman, who continued screaming from the window, had attracted the attention of the police, and when Ernest gained the hall, the door was besieged by two constables, whom he instantly admitted. At the same time, Mr. Glynn, who had never for a moment lost his self-possession, appeared with a light, and they all gathered round the outstretched body of Frost.

"He appears to be insensible," said Ernest, after bending over him for an instant.

"Queer about the neck, sir," replied one of the policemen loosening his cravat.

The other constable threw back his head, and made a guttural noise, symbolical of a choking sensation.

Frost, who had met their scrutiny with an unconscious stare, now seemed to rally a little, and tried to raise himself up. With difficulty he lifted one hand, and pointing at Mr. Glynn, muttered faintly : "NEPHEW—FORGER—BEG—BEGGARS' OPERA."—As these seemingly unmeaning words escaped his lips, he fell back ; a strong convulsion pervaded his frame ; and in a few minutes he was a corpse.

CHAPTER L.

THE CAPTAIN'S DAY OUT.

IT was daylight before Mr. Glynn and Ernest found themselves alone : so active, now their services were no longer required, were the police, coming and going for the remainder of the night with the most unwearied, and, it must be added, most irritating vigilance, besides keeping a blockading force on the premises. But at length, the two reconciled kinsmen were able to sit down to some coffee, which the poor charwoman, in spite of the persecutions of the police, had contrived to prepare.

"You heard what that miserable ruffian said," observed Mr. Glynn, after a few moments' abstraction. "What is to be done about it?"

"I thought he was raving," said Ernest.

"Don't you know, then, your cousin—that we must call him so!—has committed a crime tantamount to forgery? He is now hiding from the police, and this man has informed them of his retreat."

"I have not heard a word of it," replied Ernest, greatly shocked. "But he must be rescued from the disgrace of a public trial—if not for his own sake, for ours : for yours, sir. Would it not be well to pay the amount he is implicated for?"

"A hundred times over I would pay it, if that would avail ; but it is too late. We can't buy off the law—and thank God it is so, though, in this case, we who are innocent will suffer with the guilty."

"That must not be!" exclaimed Ernest, with emotion.

"Apart from the sympathy of kindred, which we must still feel for Wordley, such a slur on our name would break my heart, as I am sure it would yours. He must be saved, sir, and though we help him to evade the law, he will not go unpunished, nor will justice be the least defrauded. He will have to pass the remainder of his life in exile, and you will pay back the money he has wrongfully obtained."

"You say well, my dear Ernest. We should save him at all risks ; but how ?"

"I must go to him, if I can only find out where this place is."

"There is the difficulty," said Mr. Glynn, with a distracted look. "But stay. There is a man named Blackman—a Captain Blackman."

"What of him ?"

"You know him ?"

"Slightly."

"If you could find him out, I have no doubt you might reach Wordley."

"It is strange I happened to learn his address the other day by accident. I had better go to him at once."

"Pray do."—He opened a drawer, and drew forth a roll of notes. — "Take these with you," he continued, placing them in Ernest's hand. Money will do anything with this man, and if we attain our object, it should be no consideration with us."

"And none it shall be," said Ernest.

"Bless you, my dear boy," said Mr. Glynn, wringing his hand. And Ernest departed.

A Hansom, which he called from a neighbouring stand, speedily bore him to the Captain's residence, a large, shabby, and very antique house, in the purlieus of Westminster School. The abbey clock struck six as he alighted

at the Captain's door ; but, as the morning was Sunday, when Londoners are usually not very early astir, the old street, never too animated, presented an extremely secluded appearance. Nor was it difficult for Ernest to imagine that it was absolutely depopulated ; for divers thundering peals on the Captain's door, each time growing beautifully louder, elicited no response whatever either from the inmates or the neighbours ; and he was despairing of making any impression, when, happening to look up, he saw a man's head reconnoitring from the attic, and quickly recognized the bald crown of the Captain.

"Is it you, my dear fellow ?" cried the man of war, in the most friendly way, though, if the truth must be told, he had only spoken to Ernest once before. "'Pon honour, delighted to see you. I'll be with you in an instant."

And in an incredibly short time he was down at the door, fully dressed, including hat and gloves.

"By Jove, I'm very glad to see you," he said. "Allow me to have the honour of shaking hands with you. I'm sorry I can't ask you in"—the Captain never asked any one in—"but the fact is, I only have chambers here, and the people get up so confoundedly late. But I tell you what—we'll go and breakfast together in Palace Yard : a very good idea, by George !"

"I shall be most happy," replied Ernest ; "but, first, I should tell you I wish to consult with you about my cousin."

"Your cousin ! Which cousin is that ?" said the Captain innocently.

"I have only one—Wordley Glynn."

"Wordley Glynn !" repeated the Captain, as if he heard the name for the first time. "Ah ! to be sure. What's become of him ? He's been rather scarce for a day or two."

"You're not aware, then, that he is—is in some trouble?"

"You don't say so!"

Ernest, who had been fully persuaded that the Captain knew all the particulars, as well as Wordley's present retreat, was quite astonished at his apparent ignorance. In a moment, however, it occurred to him that it might be feigned, from some lurking suspicion of his intentions; and he determined to put a question which should test the Captain's sincerity.

"Yes, a little affair. I thought you might have heard of it," he said. "By the way, Captain, you know the town well; can you tell me anything of a place called the Beggars' Opera?"

"By George, I think there's a play of that name—yes, by Jove! I've seen it, with a powerful caste, my boy. Fine character, Macheath." But his face winced under Ernest's glance.

"Oh! it's a place about town, I mean," said Ernest, "and I would give something to find it." He mechanically drew forth the roll of notes, and turned them over in his hand, making the Captain's eyes sparkle.

"I tell you what it is," said the Captain, at length; "they say you and your cousin are not very good friends, and, perhaps, you'd be glad to see his hash settled in this business. By Jove, sir, I'm a man of honour—I can't betray my friend. At the same time, if I could lay my hand at this moment on a hundred pounds, I think I could find out this place for you."

"Could you convey a message to Wordley Glynn?"

"A message! between two cousins! Egad! that's sharp work, and I don't know how I could appear in it against him. But under the circumstances——"

"Pardon me," interrupted Ernest. "I don't mean a

hostile message. But I see now you are in my cousin's confidence. What I wish to announce to him is, that his retreat has been betrayed to the police, and they are probably at this moment on his track."

"That's a floorer," replied the Captain, "by Jove!"

But they had just reached the hotel in Palace Yard, and having made up his mind to a good breakfast, the Captain, after lingering a moment on the steps, in a meditative posture, thought it better to lead the way in.

"I don't know what beverages you usually take," he said to Ernest, as they entered the coffee-room: "it's the same thing to me: I love them all, and am a great consumer of liquids, being always thirsty. Suppose we have tea and coffee."

Ernest agreed, and the Captain ordered breakfast, which, by his desire, included a large supply of eatables, and, in fact, he proved to be nearly as great a consumer of solids as he was of liquids.

"Breakfast first, and business afterwards," he said, "is my maxim; and it's a remarkable circumstance that I can never talk when I'm hungry. I always begin Sunday—that's to-day, you know—with a good breakfast. Sunday is my day out. Then I can take my walks abroad without fear of John Doe or Richard Roe. By George! the acts of audacity I am guilty of on Sunday, my dear fellow, would surprise you. I've walked straight up to Honest Moses on a Sunday, and chaffed him. I have, by Jove!"

"Indeed," said Ernest. "But, Captain, I'm really very anxious about this business of my cousin. Pray tell me what can be done for him."

"Suppose you tell me first what *has been* done, while I finish these kidneys," returned the Captain, helping himself to a fresh allowance.

Ernest briefly related the particulars as they had happened.

"Humph!" observed the Captain when he had concluded; "not so bad as it might be, but bad enough. The case has been given to Naylor, of the Detectives; but I've contrived to put him on a wrong track, and he's off to Bristol, and can't be back till late to-night. Meanwhile, the policemen who were at your uncle's this morning will report what occurred there, as well as what that rascal said when he was dying. It's rather enigmatical, and not every one will make sense of it; but, by George, sir! it will be as plain as print to Naylor. I think we may reckon ourselves safe till he comes back; but, after that, we shan't have a minute. What a splendid head of hair you've got! It must be hereditary in your family."

"Then, what do you advise?" said Ernest, without noticing the interpolation. "My cousin must be got off, let it cost what it may."

"You have probably often heard me remark that a nod's as good as a wink," rejoined the Captain. "I perceive your object is to get your cousin out of your way—out of the country, in fact. Now don't interrupt me. As it happens, this suits the purposes of all. But, by Jove, it will cost money—under the circumstances. I've taken his passage; but the vessel won't sail for three days, and I thought he might have kept quiet here for that time. But egad! now he must start instantly for the coast, and go off to the ship in a pilot-boat."

"And will you see him at once, and carry out this scheme?"

"Impossible. You don't know what a den the Beggars' Opera is. I could only go there at night, and by Jove, I

wouldn't go by myself for—no, egad! not for twice the figure."

"I wish you to remember money is to be no consideration in this transaction. Whatever is required shall be forthcoming. As to your visit to my cousin, if there is any danger, I am willing to share it."

"Game!" cried the Captain. "Allow me to have the honour of shaking hands with you. If you'll go with me, we'll venture—and, i'faith, it will be a venture. There's a man called Flash Jem, who may be serviceable, if we can get hold of him, but that's not sure. Anyway, have a chaise in readiness in Farringdon Street, and come to my crib in the evening at seven. I'll have a disguise for you, and, as soon as it's dark, we'll slip out of the house, and, by Jove, we'll proceed."

"At seven o'clock," replied Ernest. "I will be punctual."

And he paid the bill, and departed.

CHAPTER LI.

SUNDAY NIGHT.

It is Sunday night. Not long since, the solemn bell tolled for the celebration of public service; and even now, crowds are pouring from the various metropolitan churches, where, during the day, devout millions have

worshipped. The Pharisee has been up to the Temple to pray : perhaps, too, the penitent, as in days of old, has stood at the gate and pleaded for mercy. A thousand spires rise to Heaven above the countless roofs of the city ; and under the shadow of each it has this day been declared, in the awful accents of inspiration, that the poor are to be our first and special care.

The poor !—the outcast, the leper, the orphan child, the famishing man, the betrayed, degraded, defaced woman ; all who are weary and heavy-laden, from the fields and by-places, the housetop and cellar—all have been invited, and, as at the Great King's supper, *forced to come in*, that they may be taught the way of life and truth and virtue.

Alas, no ! this vast city, fair and comely as it looks, hides a leprosy beneath its cloak : this whited sepulchre is full of rotting, festering—we cannot say souls, for no vestige of spirituality remains. But men brutalized, women unsexed, children grey in iniquity, and who never felt the balmy breath of innocence, here, in the midst of the town, close to the rich man's door, and almost under the shadow of the church, live in the open practice of every vice that can debase our nature, without ever hearing the voice of Religion, or feeling the beneficent influence of even human knowledge.

Rain is falling ; and the straggling knots of passengers in Holborn hurry along, regardless of everything around. The shops are all closed, but from one stately window comes a flood of light, throwing a grey reflection on the wall of St. Andrew's church-yard, on the opposite side of the street. It is in front of this house that two men dressed in soiled and threadbare suits, with their patched faces clothed in false hair, forming a luxuriant combina-

tion of whisker, beard, and moustache, and almost buried under wide-awake hats, suddenly come to a stand, while one peers through the mirror-like window of the gin-palace into the interior.

"He's there," said this individual, in whom it was impossible to recognize Captain Blackman. "I'll go in, and speak to him."

He pushed through the door, while Ernest—for his companion was no other—waited without. Still his eyes were riveted on the gorgeous fabric before him, which art and taste had exhausted all their devices to beautify, and he could not repress a thrill of indignation, as, looking up, he saw over the door the name of a well-known millionaire, the proprietor of this abominable sink of iniquity. In a few moments the Captain reappeared.

"I've spoken to Flash Jem," he said, "and the five-pound note has settled him. He engages to be our guide."

"Can't we send a message by him, without going to such a den ourselves?" replied Ernest. "I confess I shrink from the undertaking."

"Fiddle! And what you propose is impossible; for your cousin would only suspect a trap. As Frost is non est inventus, he won't move till he sees me, and hang me if I'll go without you."

"Let us proceed, then."

"You'd better come in here first. You'll see, then, if you pass muster, and that will give you confidence."

Assenting, Ernest followed him into the gin-palace.

It was a strange scene. The sumptuous bar, its lofty ceiling supported by columns of variegated marble—the radiant lights, the fittings of rosewood, ivory, and pearl, with the painted and bedizened barmaids, and the squalid, miserable, carousing bacchanals, each with the brand of Cain on his hardened brow. Ernest instinctively recog-

nised Flash Jem—a short, thick-set, hard-featured man, dressed in a showy white coat, a sky-blue cravat, and railroad trousers ; and having a profusion of long black locks dangling from beneath his white hat. As they entered, he came forward to meet them, holding aloft in one hand a small pewter measure of gin, while he flourished about a glass with the other.

“Jim along Josey,” he said to the Captain. “Damp your mags.”

“Thankee, I’m never thirsty,” replied the Captain, with astounding self-denial. “I believe I was once nipped by a mad dog ; and ever since, I’ve shied at all descriptions of fluids. Makes me shiver, by Jove !”

“Gig !” exclaimed Jem. “Here,” and he proffered the glass to Ernest—“off with his head.”

Ernest shrank back.

“He’s deaf and dumb,” said the Captain, fearing Ernest was going to commit himself. “Don’t give him gin, or you’ll set him wild.”

“Gig again !” cried Jem.—And he tossed the liquid fire down his own fated throat.

Around rose the hoarse shout, the frantic laugh, the snatch of ribald song, the blasphemous oath ; and, through the stately window, Ernest saw the illuminated clock of the Church, on the opposite side of the street, looking down on the scene like a great EYE—reminding him it was Sunday night.

CHAPTER LII.

THE BEGGARS' OPERA.

SUNDAY NIGHT ! We are ascending Saffron Hill—that Tarpeian Rock, where so many are hurled into perdition. Through a dark frowning archway, we enter, not the recesses, but the intestines of the city. Here no Levite passes even on the other side, here no Samaritan ever comes, here the great capital pours a stream of reeking filth past the very doors of tottering, rotting houses, teeming with beings as vile and polluted, who know not their right hand from their left : a nursery of pestilence, a hotbed of crime, a vast, horrible, eternal lazaret-house, where body and soul are equally infected, and equally lost.

On, under the black archway, up court and passage and narrow fetid lane, with the black gutter ever running through, like a vein of poison—with the same sounds of strife and wicked revelry, the same pestilential and deadly miasma, rising on every side : Ernest and the Captain followed their conductor in silence and with rapid steps, wondering what was his clue to the Labyrinth. At last, they came to a passage so narrow that they could only enter it separately, and after proceeding some paces, Flash Jem, who went first, dived into an open doorway, hardly visible in the darkness, though within a rushlight, stuck in a sconce against the wall, showed a long corridor, where, directly under the light, a strange, misshapen

figure, about three feet high, and apparently all head loomed out from the deep flitting shadows, behind a small table. This was the Cerberus of the Pandemonium, and he laughed long and loud as the company entered.

"Why, Jem, my flower of society, you've been scarce a bit," he cried, as they came up to the table. "But who's your henchmen?"

"Two swells out of luck," answered Jem. "I'm gags-man for 'em."

"You!" returned the dwarf, with a shriek of laughter. "But they aint blues, so down with your tanner and walk."

Each paid his sixpence, the nightly charge for shelter in this model lodging-house, and which, to prevent any attempt at spoliation, was immediately dropped down a long pipe into a well-secured receptacle beneath the floor, the dwarf repeating his scream of delight as he threw it in.

"Now you may hop," he cried, touching a spring in the wall.

"Jim along Josey," said Jem. And he skipped by the table, and thrusting his hand in a ring in the floor, raised a trap-door, disappearing in the abyss. The Captain and Ernest followed, and, as they descended the ladder below, narrowly escaped a concussion from the falling trap-door, which the dwarf, by again touching the spring, caused to drop prematurely, going off in another ecstasy at their discomfiture.

But new incidents were before them. In the humid cellar below, there was only a glimmer of light; but a noise different from anything Ernest had ever heard; a strange confusion of harsh, discordant sounds, a Babel of tongues, broke on the ear, and the next moment a door was thrown open by Jem, disclosing the seat of the uproar.

It was a long low cellar, with gas-lights flaring from black pipes in the wall, throwing up volumes of smoke, and shedding a vivid light on scores of callous faces, rife with the worst passions of our nature. All ages were there, from the hoary ruffian of ninety to the infant in arms, clinging to the breast of its drunken mother. Here, a party squatted on the ground were playing cards; there, two young lads, seated on the corner of a greasy dirt-stained table, were engaged with dominoes; further on, others rattled the dice-box; and a knot of smaller fry, of both sexes, were tossing half-pence, which rolled about with an impunity verifying the adage that there is honour among thieves. In the midst of this Vanity Fair half-a-dozen little urchins were being trained as pickpockets, under the superintending eye of a man in a drugget coat, with very high cheek-bones and a pug nose, who enacted the part of a detective, and whenever he saw the theft committed, pounced upon the lax and clumsy operator, and cruelly ill-used him. There were the blind, the maimed, and the halt, with all their infirmities cured: the chiffonnier, the sham sweep, the vender of illicit spirits, with a skin of the liquid poison hanging from his waist, the crossing-sweeper and the cadger. There, stood a group of little children, who had been begging all day—the borrowed family of a ballad singer, and who, now released from duty, were listening in ecstasies to a vile catch, carolled by an Ethiopian serenader; while two men were sparring close by, amidst the plaudits of a small circle of admirers.

Then the din! the mingled strains of the banjo and cracked fiddle—the roars of boisterous laughter, the ribald songs, the horrid maledictions, the affected screams of girls and women as they romped about in the throng—made Ernest's ear and heart ache; and he looked up at

the black wall as if he again expected to see the illuminated clock of the church gazing down on the scene like a great EYE, reminding him it was Sunday night.

As he entered, a woman who had been crouching in the dark cellar, without catching sight of his face as he passed, suddenly started up, when Ernest, looking round, seemed to have a dim remembrance of her features.

"Jessie!" he murmured.

"Hush!" was the whispered reply; "I guess who you want. He's sitting in the corner there."

Ernest moved in the direction indicated, taking care, as he glided through the throng, to avoid any collision. At length, he reached Wordley, whose disguise, however, he did not immediately penetrate.

"Ah!" said Wordley, as he accosted him; "you here! How do you do? I'm delighted to see you." And he was as polite and courtly, as if it was his uncle's drawing-room.—"Life here, isn't it? No stage can come up to this!"

"Follow us out," replied Ernest, as much shocked at his recklessness as by the scene around. "You must fly directly."

"Ha!"

"By Jove, I'm afraid we're fixed!" said the Captain, striking in. "Jem can't break the spring of the trap, and there's no other way of raising it. The dwarf lets no one out till morning, when they're once in."

"Here the Captain's ally sauntered up.

"He's here now," he muttered.

"Who?" replied the Captain.

"Look!"

And, turning his eye on the door, the Captain discerned Naylor, the detective.

"Keep behind us," said Ernest to Wordley. "We'll make a dash for the door."

"No use in that," said the Captain. "We're like Sterne's starling—we can't get out."

"Follow me," said Jessie, stealing up to Ernest.

"Do you know the trick?" asked Flash Jem.

"Yes."

She stooped down against the wainscot, and a panel, yielding to her pressure, flew open, disclosing a dark cellar beyond. Instantly every eye was turned on the aperture, and a shout broke from every voice, while there was a general rush to the spot. But Flash Jem, stimulated by a fresh donation, drove back the foremost; and Ernest, Wordley, and the Captain darted after Jessie, who, as they joined her, shot back the panel, for the moment interposing a barrier to pursuit.

They were now in complete darkness, while the din behind, audible through the partition, reminded them of the necessity of despatch. Jessie, indeed, lost not a moment in groping about for the outlet, but this was not so easily found. At last, she came upon it; the massive bolts were removed; and a kick from Ernest, breaking away the rusty hinges, drove through the trap, which fell with a splash into a black, fetid stream without. It was the Fleet Ditch.

"The plank!" said Jessie, standing in the aperture. "Reach it up."

"Here it is," cried Ernest.

They raised it to the ledge, and pushing it over the stream, planted one end on a low wall on the other bank, thus bridging the channel.

In a moment they were all across; and Ernest, to cut off pursuit, pushed the plank into the stream.

"By Jove, they've got through," cried the Captain.

There was a loud shout, and, looking round, Ernest saw the aperture was now occupied by the Detective,

who instantly sprang his rattle, arousing the whole neighbourhood.

"What's to be done now, my gallant friend?" asked Wordley of the Captain, who, indeed, knew not which way to shape his course.

"We want to reach Holborn, Jessie," said Ernest.

"I can guide you!"

A narrow footway ran between the wall and the houses, leading into a dark court, and, traversing this, Jessie conducted them, with rapid steps, through a maze of tortuous passages, to a sort of yard, opening on Holborn Hill. Fortunately it was raining hard, and the hour being now late, but few people were about, so that they encountered no interruption, and reaching the great thoroughfare they struck across to Farringdon Street, where the post-chaise awaited them. Pulling open the door, the Captain sprang in, followed by Wordley.

"One moment," said Ernest. And he added, "Can you find your way to Paddington, Jessie?"

"To your uncle?"

"Ah! you know then! Yes, to him. Tell him we are on our way to the coast. He has promised me to take care of you for the future. But you will learn more from him—of Frost: more than you think."

He waved his hand, and springing up the steps, the chaise whirled off.

CHAPTER LIII.

WHICH IS THE LAST.

It was a sad morning at Mr. De Burgh's. The intelligence received from various quarters, though still imperfect, left no doubt of the loss of the Indiaman, on which the whole of his remaining fortune, with the exception of a settlement on Mrs. De Burgh, was staked ; and the day had now arrived, when the proud man was to leave his great house, with all its splendour and luxury, and hide his diminished head in a cottage. Already the establishment was broken up ; and of his large retinue of servants, only two were retained ; while a hired fly stood at the door to carry away those who, but a few days previously, had had a stately chariot at their beck. As Mr. De Burgh sat in his magnificent library—his no longer—ruminating on this melancholy reverse, and waiting only the appearance of his wife and daughter to depart, he realized the experience of the wisest of men, that everything living is but vanity. Memory bore him back to the days of his childhood, when, the son of a petty tradesman, he had spent many an hour in his father's shop ; then he saw himself, as he grew older, a successful man of business, a speculator, a capitalist, gradually rising to the summit of commercial eminence. Where now was the gold he had so coveted, so loved ? where his miserable adulators, his troops of friends ? All, at a touch, had vanished, like the mist of morning ; and, as the sun of his prosperity went down, he stood helpless and alone in the dark night of his adversity.

Helpless and alone !—for in this moment of bitterness, he counted as nothing the dutiful wife, the loving child. All that woman's gentle voice, and woman's tender sympathy, could do, by a thousand soothing ministrations, failed to alleviate the stern anguish of his spirit ; and, mourning for the sordid metal which possessed his affections, he was like the stricken parent of old, who refused to be comforted.

So absorbed was he in his reflections, that the door opened without attracting his notice ; and Mrs. De Burgh entered, accompanied by Ernest Glynn.

"I have not come to disturb you yet, my dear Mr. De Burgh," said his wife, in a cheerful voice. "I shall not be ready for a few minutes, but, meanwhile, I have brought a friend to see you."

"A *friend*, ma'am !" answered Mr. De Burgh, with a caustic emphasis on the word.

"If you will allow me to call myself so, Mr. De Burgh," said Ernest, stepping forward.

"Much obliged to you, sir," replied the proud man, stiffly.

"I should not have intruded upon you this morning," pursued Ernest, "if, knowing my feelings, Mrs. De Burgh had not allowed me to speak to you on a subject so connected with my peace, that every moment of delay is a burden and a trial to me. May I hope you will confirm this indulgence."

"You may proceed, sir," said Mr. De Burgh ; "but I beg you will be brief."

"In a word, then, sir, I have contracted a sincere attachment for Miss De Burgh—and one of such a character, that I can no longer defer asking your permission to pay my addresses to her. Let me entreat you not to

decide against me, as on your answer depends the happiness or misery of my life."

This appeal, if not the proposal, seemed rather to amaze Mr. De Burgh, and he suddenly shook off his apathy, and eyed Ernest with a peculiarly searching glance.

"I have told Mr. Glynn of the sort of promise you are under to his cousin about Emily," observed Mrs. De Burgh, "although his conduct since may be thought to have cancelled that engagement; and it appears he has admitted as much himself."

"Not only so, but he has given me this letter," said Ernest, producing a sealed epistle, "in which he formally releases Mr. De Burgh from his promise. He put it into my hands yesterday morning, when I saw him on board ship, on his way to America."

"Ha!" muttered Mr. De Burgh.—And opening the letter, he ran his eye over the contents.

"This is so far well," he said, though with a frown. "But are you aware that owing to the great losses I have sustained, my daughter has now no cap—I mean, fortune?"

"But for my knowledge of this circumstance, I should hardly have ventured to seek your immediate approbation of my suit," returned Ernest, modestly. "My own income, indeed, is small, but I hope, by diligence and exertion, to make it sufficient for our requirements, if I should be so fortunate and so happy as to obtain Miss De Burgh's hand, and I shall endeavour to compensate for our humble establishment by my affection and devotion."

"You're a person of very extraordinary feelings, sir," said Mr. De Burgh.

Ernest was rather embarrassed by this remark; but,

at length, said, "May I hope you will sanction my addresses, sir—and Mrs. De Burgh also?"

"Let Mr. Glynn see my daughter, ma'am," said Mr. De Burgh. "If he obtains her consent, he shall have mine."

"Mine he has already," said Mrs. De Burgh.

"Thank you, thank you, my dear, kind friends!" exclaimed Ernest, in joyous accents. "I can ask no more."

Mrs. De Burgh hurried him—but too willing—from the room, her husband looking after them till they disappeared.

"Very extraordinary!" he then murmured. "He doesn't care a pin about capital. But it's his FEELINGS!"

"Emmy is in the drawing-room, just ready to go," said Mrs. De Burgh, as she led Ernest up the grand staircase. "Poor child! she bears our reverses nobly."

But when they entered the room, it was evident from a telltale redness about her soft, sweet eyes, that poor Emily had been weeping—though perhaps it was not from any grief at the vicissitudes of fortune.

"Ernest!" she exclaimed, looking up—and one of her old blushes spread over her face.

"Yes, dear Emily, Ernest! let me say, *your* Ernest!" and he took her not unwilling hand. "I have come to say how I love you, dearest Emily—to lay my life at your feet."

"What is this?" cried the agitated girl, her tears again flowing. "Ah, mamma! dear mamma! can it be true?"

And turning to Mrs. De Burgh, she hid her face on her bosom.

"I'll have nothing to do with you," said Mrs. De Burgh, though she twined her arm round her. "You're not my Emmy any longer. I give you entirely over to this good-for-nothing Ernest. It's a most singular fact."

"Dearest Emily, say you assent to the gift!" pleaded Ernest.

Yes, she was his!—his, though the word was not spoken; his in heart, in hope, by promise: his for ever! What happiness! what rapture! then indeed they felt that—for at least one moment of life—earth could be made Heaven.

But Mrs. De Burgh, for once cruel and inconsiderate, would not leave them to themselves; no, not for an instant. She was thinking of the proud, fallen man below, lost in the gloom of his own bitter, seared, benighted thoughts; and, scarcely allowing them time to exchange a few words, she hurried the lovers down to the library.

Another old man was there—Mr. Glynn, talking very sociably with the broken capitalist; and, as the party entered, all Mr. De Burgh's gloom seemed to have vanished.

"And these are my children!" cried Mr. Glynn, advancing to Ernest and Emily, "Thank God I have lived to this hour! And may He bless you, my dear, dear children, and make you happy in each other."

And he took their two hands and clasped them together.

"This is a most delightful fact!" exclaimed Mrs. De Burgh, tears of joy making her spectacles very dim.

"I know the value of capital," exclaimed Mr. De Burgh, "and that is much; but there's one thing still more valuable, and that is FEELINGS. As a matter of choice, GIVE ME FEELINGS!"

NEW WORKS AND NEW EDITIONS

PUBLISHED BY

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND CO.,

2, FARRINGTON STREET.

CAPTAIN SPENCER'S NEW WORK ON THE SEAT OF WAR.

In post 8vo. price 6s. cloth lettered,

TURKEY, RUSSIA, BLACK SEA, AND CIRCASSIA.

By Captain SPENCER. Containing many Illustrations, including Views of Odessa, Sebastopol, Varna, Widdin, &c. ; and four Portraits in colours of the Sultan, the Czar, Schamyl, and a Circassian Lady, with a Map of the Seat of War.

"Captain Spencer, having spent many years in these countries, is fully qualified to give the most correct and latest information relative to scenes which are at the present moment fraught with so intense an interest: whoever wishes to make himself acquainted with the *Seat of War*, cannot possibly do better than study Captain Spencer's book."

NEW LIFE OF RICHELIEU.

In foolscap 8vo. price 3s. 6d. cloth lettered,

LIFE OF RICHELIEU. By WILLIAM ROBSON,

Translator of "Bonnechose's History of France," and "Michaud's Crusades." Four Illustrations.

THE BEST GERMAN DICTIONARY.

In 1 thick vol. price 15s. cloth lettered,

HILPERT'S ENGLISH-GERMAN and GERMAN-ENGLISH DICTIONARY. Compiled from the large quarto volume, in one thick volume of nearly two thousand pages, and bound in cloth.

The German language is now so extensively studied, that a Standard Dictionary of the language was very much required. The present one is confidently recommended to supply this want. Founded upon the voluminous and expensive 4to. of Dr. Hilpert's—it contains all that the German student can wish for. The advantages of this work over the other German Dictionaries will be found to be—

- 1st. Its excessive cheapness.
- 2nd. Its great completeness in the scientific department, and its easy etymological arrangement.
- 3rd. The care with which provincialisms, ironical or sarcastic words, and vulgarisms, are distinguished from the colloquial terms in ordinary use.
- 4th. The English portion has been produced under the direction of a Society of English Scholars in Carlsruhe, and hence great accuracy ensured.
- And 5th. German characters are used throughout the work.

ROUTLEDGE'S MAP OF THE SEAT OF WAR.

Price 1s. in case,

ROUTLEDGE'S NEW MAP of the SEAT OF WAR. Compiled from the latest Austrian and Russian surveys. It includes the Baltic and Black Seas, with Plans of St. Petersburg, Constantinople, Cronstadt, and Sebastopol. It is without exception the best and cheapest that has appeared.

SIR CHARLES NAPIER, "the Great Man."—*See Singleton Fontenoy.*

Price 1s. 6d. fancy boards,

SINGLETON FONTENOY. By JAMES HANNAY.

"Since Marryatt's day, Singleton Fontenoy is decidedly the best Nautical Novel, and we are not surprised at its success just now. One of the characters is a hero of the hour, none other than 'Old Charley' himself. If Tom Cringle had given us his Mediterranean log, he would scarcely have excelled 'Singleton Fontenoy,' in variety of matter and freshness of style: his sarcastic and manly English style recalls to us both Thackeray and Cobbett."—*The Press.*

Price 1s. in boards,

ARAGO'S ASTRONOMY. Translated, with Notes. Revised to the present time by the Rev. L. TOMLINSON. With numerous Illustrations.

"In fine, Arago's is the best and most popular treatise on Astronomy that has ever been written. In these pages will be found, in lucid language, all the noble simplicity of the professor; and every one by it may comprehend the entire system of the heavenly bodies."—*Extract from Preface to New Edition of Arago's Works.*

Price 1s. sewed,

CAGE and SINGING BIRDS. By H. G. ADAMS. How to Catch, Rear, and Breed them; with every information respecting their Treatment in Health and Disease. With illustrations.

EDITED BY THE REV. R. A. WILLMOTT.

In 1 vol. price 5s. cloth gilt,

GRAY, PARNELL, COLLINS, WARTON, and GREEN'S POETICAL WORKS, with a Biographical Notice of each Author, and Notes by the Rev. R. A. WILLMOTT. Illustrated by Birket Foster and Edward Corbould. Forming the New Volume of Routledge's Edition of the British Poets.

In 1 vol. price 2s. 6d. cloth lettered,

BARNES' (ALBERT) PRACTICAL SERMONS. Designed for Congregations and Families. Copyright volume, uniform with "Cumming's Edition of Barnes's Commentary."

"The discourses in this volume are wholly practical. They were intended to be such as would be adapted to impress on the mind the importance and necessity of personal religion, and it is hoped good may be done by their perusal."

In foolscap 8vo. price 2s. cloth, or 2s. 6d. gilt edges,

THE CABIN BY THE WAYSIDE. By Lady CAMPBELL, Author of "Story of an Apple," with Engravings after designs by Phiz.

"I write for the young. My chief aim is to make those among them, who are blessed with this world's good, acquainted with the trials, the sufferings, the pleasures, and consolations, which their less fortunate fellow-creatures experience."
—*Extract from Preface.*

In 1 vol. 8vo. price 10s. 6d. cloth gilt,

DOMESTIC POULTRY. Edited by MARTIN DOYLE. With numerous Woodcuts, and Twenty large Illustrations drawn from nature, and printed in colours.

Subscribers are respectfully requested to complete their sets at once, as the book will only be sold in a complete form after a short time.

"To all poultry keepers this work will be invaluable, as it will save them ten times its price every year. It is the most useful, practical, and complete book that has ever been issued on Domestic Poultry."

MR. MANN'S EDUCATIONAL CENSUS.

Now Ready, in Royal 8vo., price 2s. sewed,

EDUCATIONAL CENSUS of GREAT BRITAIN: being the Unabridged Official Report of HORACE MANN, Esq.

"This, it is fully expected, will be equally successful with the Religious Census—a work, says the *Westminster Review*, 'worth its weight in gold,' and of which upwards of 20,000 copies have been sold."

MR. AINSWORTH'S NEW TALE OF ENGLISH HOME.

In one volume, price 5s. cloth gilt,

FLITCH of BACON; or, the **CUSTOM** of DUNMOW. A Tale of English Home. By W. HARRISON AINSWORTH. With Illustrations by JOHN GILBERT.

THE BEST GUIDE TO THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

Price 1s. fancy boards,

ROUTLEDGE'S GUIDE to the **CRYSTAL PALACE** and **PARK** at **SYDENHAM**, with Plans of the Courts and Grounds.

"It is a cheap and convenient companion."—*Athenæum*.

"An excellent guide to the various departments."—*Morning Post*.

"Exceedingly entertaining and highly instructive."—*Sunday Times*.

"Will excite interest far beyond the Exhibition."—*Illustrated News*.

"We earnestly recommend this excellent Guide."—*Advertiser*.

"Is well deserving the notice of the public."—*Morning Chronicle*.

"Contains interesting and valuable information."—*Sun*.

"This work is a speaking Guide."—*Era*.

"Is both pleasant, instructive, and concise."—*Globe*.

"A very intelligent and comprehensive Guide."—*Observer*.

"A very ably compiled volume."—*Dispatch*.

"Possesses sufficient merit to be of permanent value."—*Atlas*.

"The best book that has appeared."—*Bell's Messenger*.

Price 2s. cloth gilt,

CARPENTER'S LAYS AND BALLADS. With Four Illustrations. Printed royal 24mo. to match American Poets, cloth, gilt edges.

NEW WORK BY THE REV. J. G. WOOD.

In foolscap 8vo., price 3s. 6d. cloth gilt,

SKETCHES and ANECDOTES of ANIMAL LIFE.
By the Rev. J. G. Wood, author of the Illustrated Natural History, with illustrations by Harrison Weir.

"A most appropriate book for a prize or present."

EDITED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE CRESCENT & THE CROSS.

Price 1s. 6d. fancy boards.

HOCHELAGA ; or ENGLAND in the NEW WORLD.
Edited by ELIOT WARBURTON. A New Edition revised and corrected to the present time.

BY THE AUTHOR OF CALEB STUKELY.

Price 1s, fancy boards,

WE ARE ALL LOW PEOPLE THERE!—The BANKING-HOUSE, &c. By the Author of "Caleb Stukely."

The above originally appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and are now reprinted by permission.

In 2 vols. 8vo. cloth emblematically gilt, reduced to 12s. 6d.

(Published at £1. 8s.)

CARLETON'S TRAITS AND STORIES OF THE IRISH PEASANTRY. A new Pictorial Edition, with an Autobiographical Introduction, Explanatory Notes, and numerous Illustrations on Wood and Steel, by Phiz, &c.

The following Tales and Sketches are comprised in this edition. :—

Ned M'Keown.
The Three Tasks.
Shane Fadth's Wedding.
Larry M'Farland's Wake.
The Battle of the Factions.
The Station.
The Party Fight and Funeral.
The Lough Derry Pilgrim.
The Hedge School.
The Midnight Mass.

The Donah, or the Horse Stealers.
Phil Purcel, the Pig-driver.
Geography of an Irish Oath.
The Llanham Shee.
Going to Maynooth.
Phelim O'Toole's Courtship.
The Poor Scholar.
Wildgoose Lodge.
Tubber Derg; or, the Red Well.
Neale Malone.

"Mr. Carleton has caught most accurately the lights and shades of Irish life; his tales are full of vigorous picturesque description and genuine pathos. They may be referred to as furnishing a very correct portrait of Irish peasantry."—*Quarterly Review*.

"Truly—intensely, Irish."—*Blackwood*.

